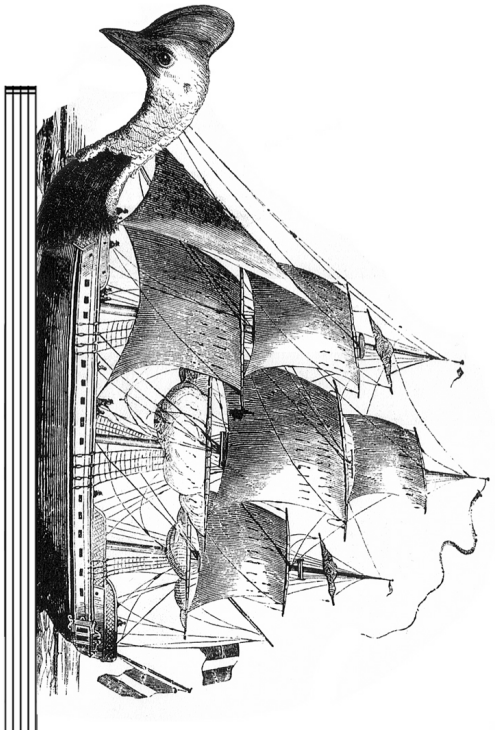

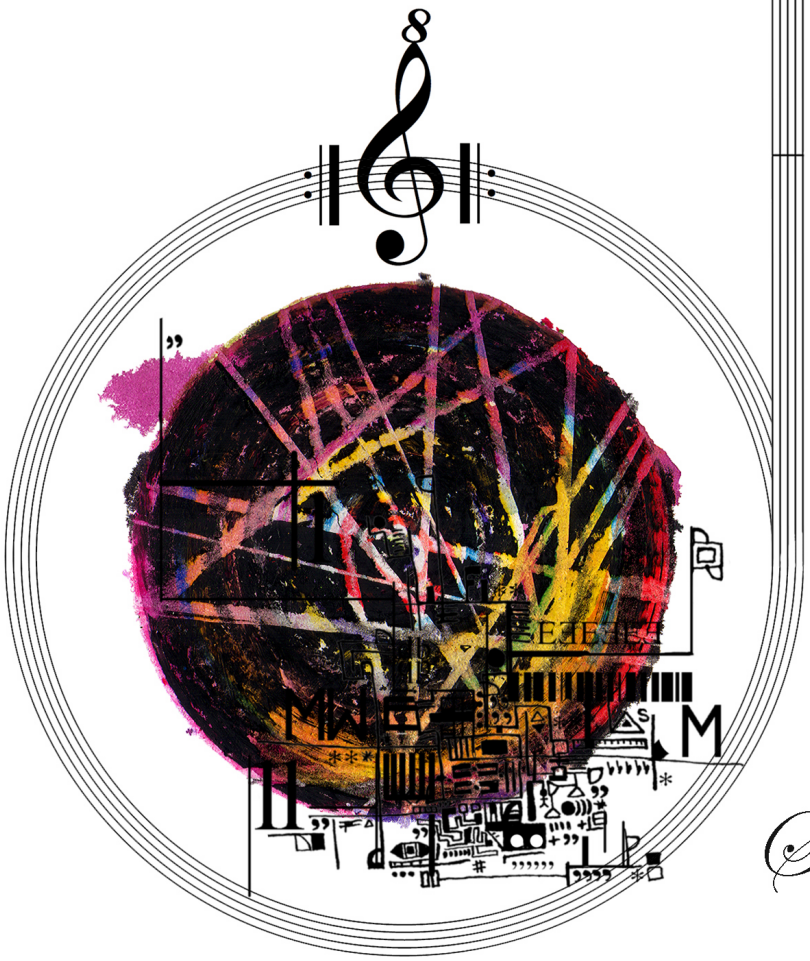

the Devil's Dreamworld

songs for thirty-button
Anglo concertina

Steven R. Arntson

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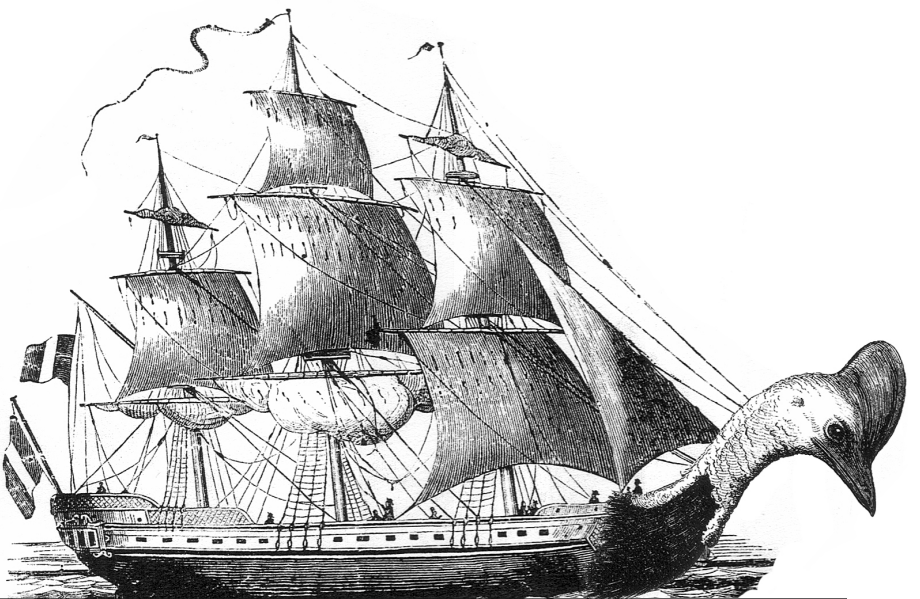
The Devil's Dreamworld: Songs by Steven R. Arntson

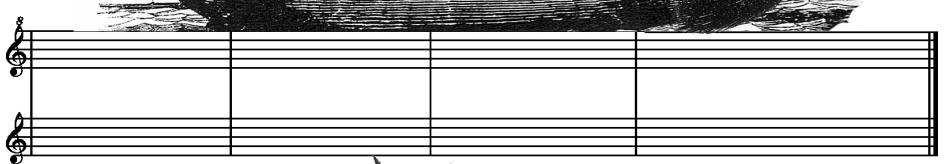
First Printing

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Seattle

the Devil's Dreamworld





Songs by Steven R. Arntson

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in this book of tunes. This introduction contains a few explanatory notes on the music to follow. With two exceptions, these songs are written for a thirty-button C/G Anglo concertina, with Lachanal note arrangement (the exceptions, "My Favorite Constellation" and "House of Earth," are playable on a twenty-button Anglo).

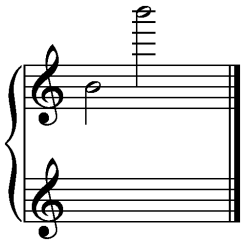
The concertina is not an oft-used instrument in art music, and when I began to transcribe these pieces I encountered numerous perplexing situations for which I knew of no previously established solutions. It's my hope that the innovations I've produced prove useful to other concertinists. I welcome advice and criticism.

I'd like to apologize at the outset for any errors you may find in the transcriptions that follow—I've been as diligent as I can be, but I know some mistakes will prove to have trumped my powers of perception.

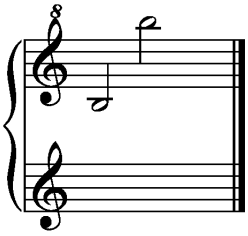
Range

It seems sensible to me to write concertina music using the grand staff, with the lower system representing the left-hand notes and the upper system representing the right, as is typically done with the piano.

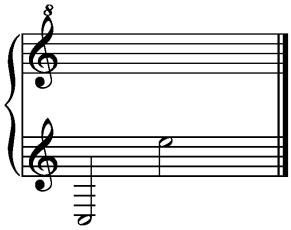
The concertina's right-hand side is pitched somewhat too high for convenient use of the treble clef. As seen here, use of the treble clef for the right hand results not only in a surfeit of ledger lines, but also in almost half of the stave rendered vestigial:



My solution is to employ an octave transposed treble clef, which establishes the following more reasonable written range:



The left side of the instrument is also problematic, since a few of the bass buttons fall far below the staff:

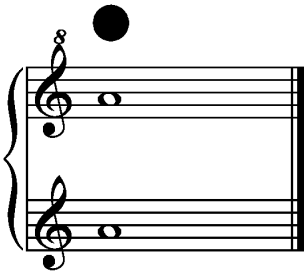


Nonetheless, I've continued to employ that clef out of convenience.

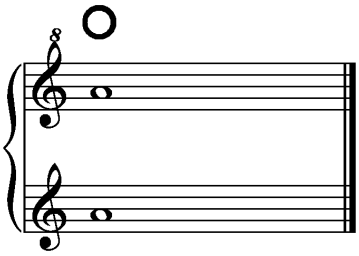
Bisonority

Each button on the Anglo concertina is bisonoric, producing two notes: one at the push of the bellows, and another on the pull. I've chosen to indicate bellows direction using the following two symbols:

A closed circle indicates that the bellows should be pushed closed.



An open circle indicates that the bellows should be pulled open.

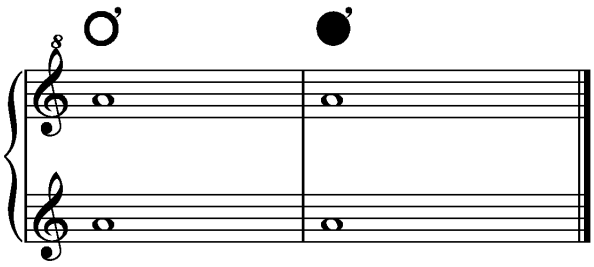


Each bellows directive refers to the note directly beneath it and to all subsequent notes until the establishment of the contrary directive (which in turn persists until opposed). Because the bellows directives often take up a good portion of the space available at the top of the staff, I generally include other directives, such as fermata, staccati, and accents, below the staff.

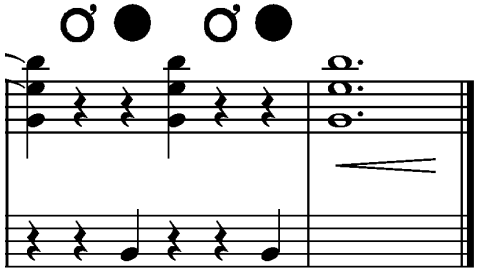
The Air Button

The music in *The Devil's Dreamworld* frequently employs the air button. As a general rule, I've left it to the player to find their own necessity regarding the employment of air, especially considering the variation in the number of bellows folds and air tightness from one concertina to the next. The instrument I play features six bellows folds, which I believe to be fairly typical.

That said, there are times in this music when appropriate application of the air button is particularly essential. In these cases, I've used the breath mark common to vocal music to indicate spots where the instrument will breathe. This symbol appears with the bellows symbols described above. If the symbol appears above notes, the air button should be employed while the notes are played:



If the symbol appears above a rest, the air button should be employed by itself:



Initial Bellows State

The relative degree of openness of the bellows at the beginning of a piece is often significant. Performers can figure this out by simply playing through and then determining, in retrospect, how much air should have been available at the outset—but this seems like an avoidable inconvenience, so in these pieces you'll see a symbol, set before the opening staff and adapted from the air button symbol above, that indicates the initial state of the bellows by quarters:

Vibrato

Vibrato can be employed subtly or markedly through the shaking of the bellows—an effect that can be employed subtly or markedly. I play with some vibrato to establish better arcs on long notes, but this, it seems to me, doesn't demand mention in the music. However, there are times when a note should be played with an especially pronounced vibrato, and I've used a curlicue symbol to indicate such instances:

This symbol refers only to the note or chord under which it appears (unless a note or chord is tied across a bar line, in which case the symbol will affect the tied note as well).

Accidentals

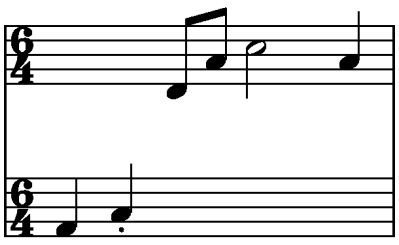
The thirty-button Anglo is called a chromatic instrument, and while this is largely accurate with regard to melody, any experienced player has encountered the harmonic limitations of the instrument. In terms of playing generally, it seems to me that pieces for Anglo concertina will seldom if ever be written in keys of more than three sharps or flats. The music in this collection passes through many keys, but invariably returns to those near the top of the circle of fifths. Because of this, I find accidentals more convenient than key signatures, and I employ them here according to convention (each accidental persists to the end of the measure it occupies unless cancelled by a natural sign).

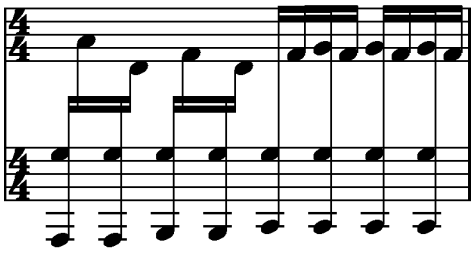
Diacritical Markings

I've written out these songs with the assumption that the player and the singer are the same person—each marking applies to all staves in the system. Thus, a hairpin crescendo above the concertina part affects the vocal part; a directive of mezzo-forte above the vocal part applies also to the concertina part; et cetera. My aim here was to prevent clutter; I hope it doesn't result in any confusion.

Cross-Staff Melodies

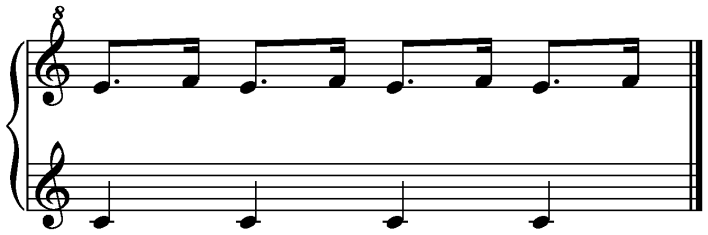
This repertoire commonly involves lines that pass between the left and right hands. I've chosen to employ cross-staff notation that avoids placeholder rests when it seems clear that a single line is moving between the staves. Below are two examples that illustrate the variety of ways I've notated such passages.



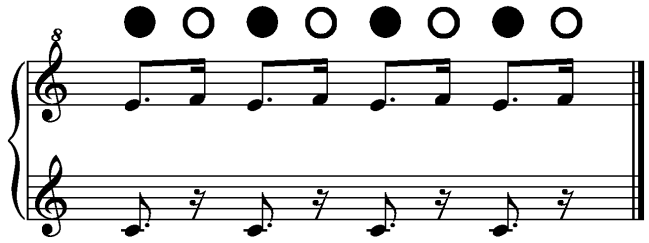


Chordal Interruption

Much of the music contained here features chords played by one hand supporting melodies played by the other. An important subtlety arises when a passing note in the melody line requires a brief change in bellows direction, during which an accompanying chord must be interrupted until the bellows direction returns to favor it. I've tried to make such interruptions clear in the music, as inaccuracy on this point has stymied me in the past in various music available for the concertina. Thus, the following passage might be written this way, understandably, for a piano player:



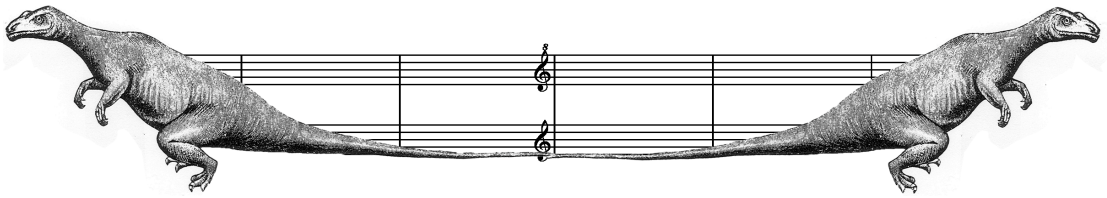
but for a concertinist, I would render it this way:



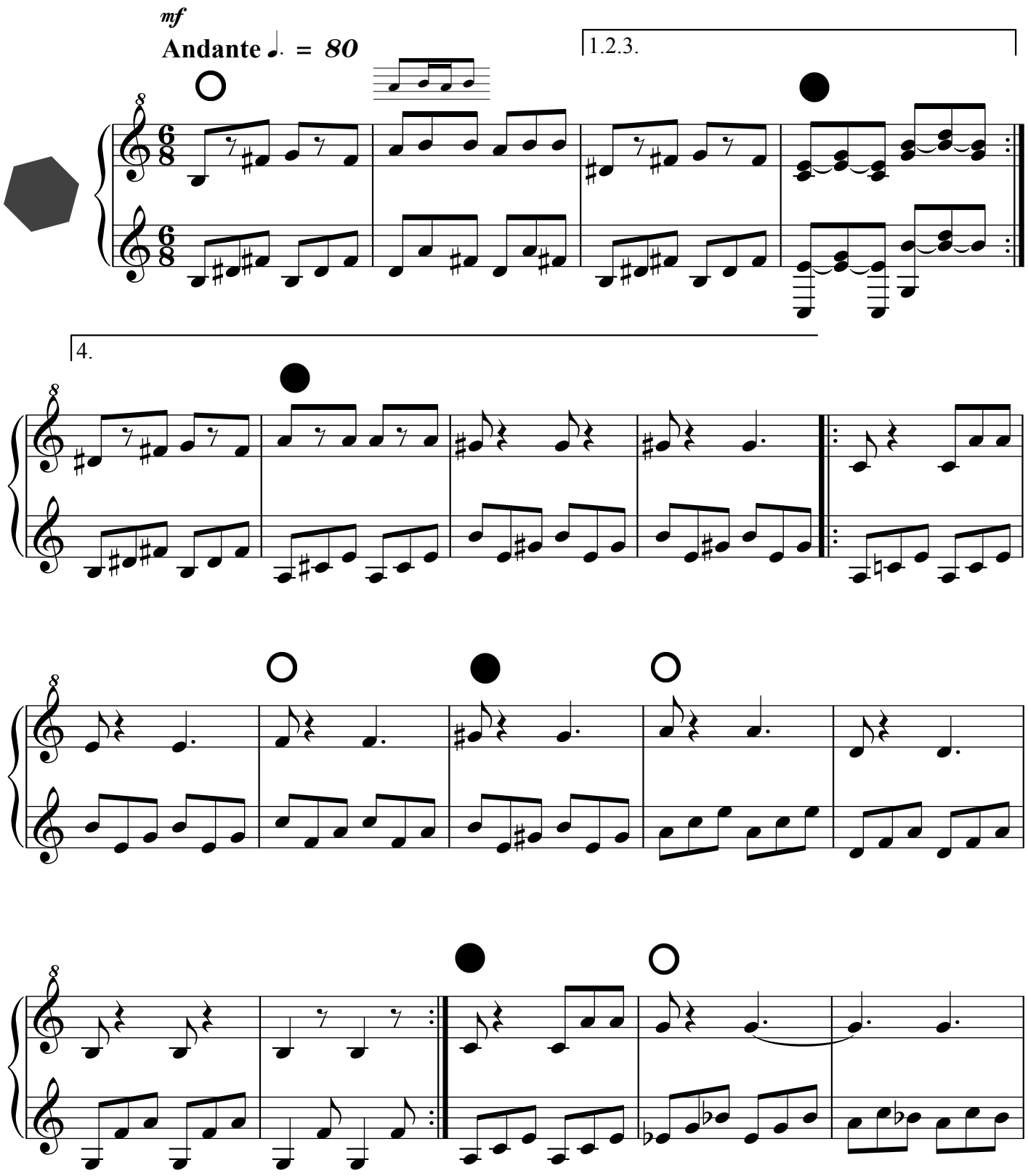
Thank you again for buying this book. I welcome feedback—if you find mistakes in the pieces (easy enough to do, I'm sure), or if you have any suggestions for improvements, please contact me through www.stevenarntson.info.

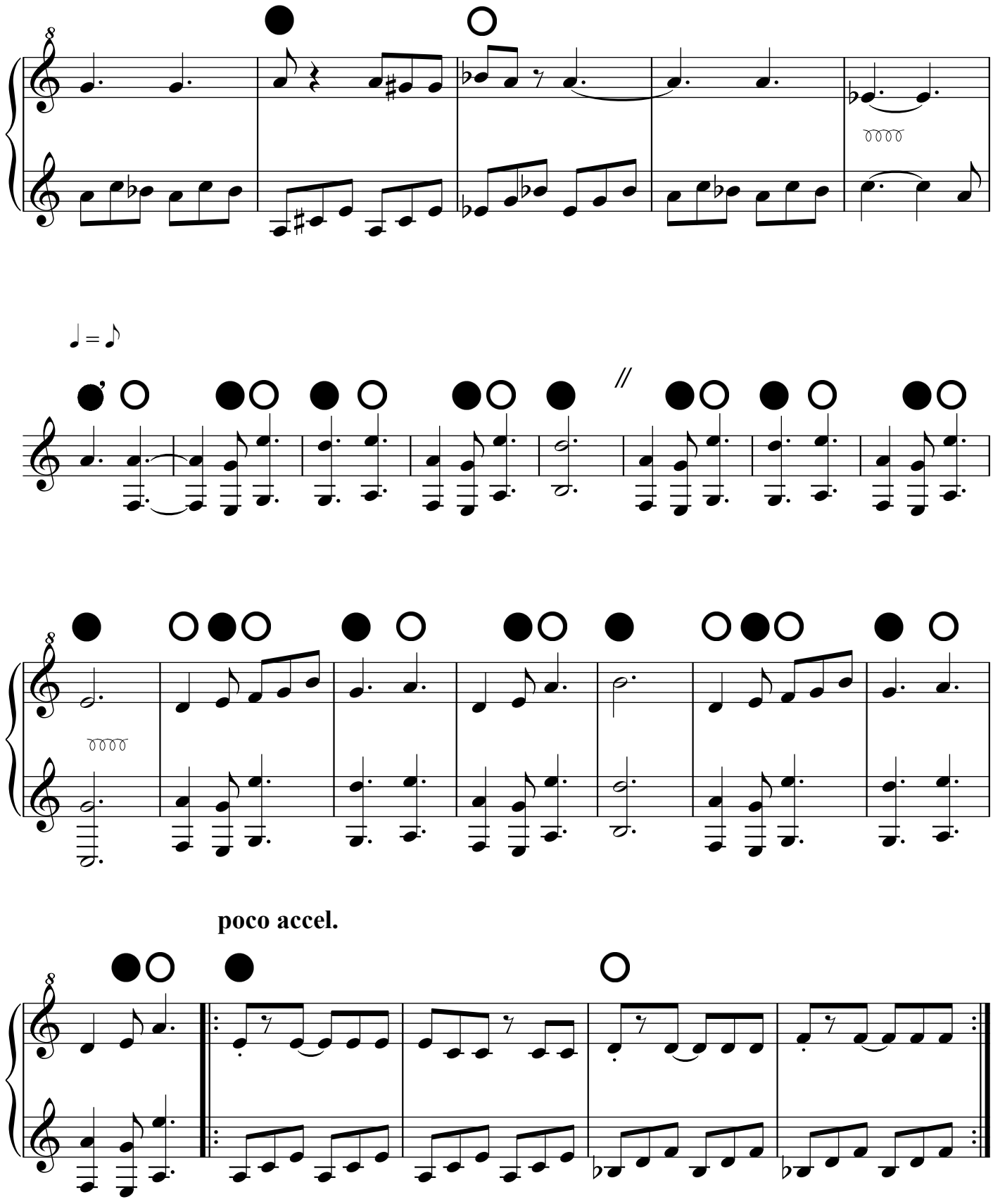
Additionally, if any of the notation strategies I've used seem helpful, please adopt or further adapt them freely. I discovered recently that music notation systems in the U.S. can be covered by patent law—a disheartening fact in a world where patent and copyright application so often infringe on creative freedom. I've dedicated my notational innovations to the public domain under the title "Concertina Notation System," to preserve the right of anyone to use, reproduce, and/or modify the system in perpetuity. The compositions themselves are copylefted under a Creative Commons "Noncommercial, Attribution" license. Additional information about copyleft is available at www.creativecommons.org.

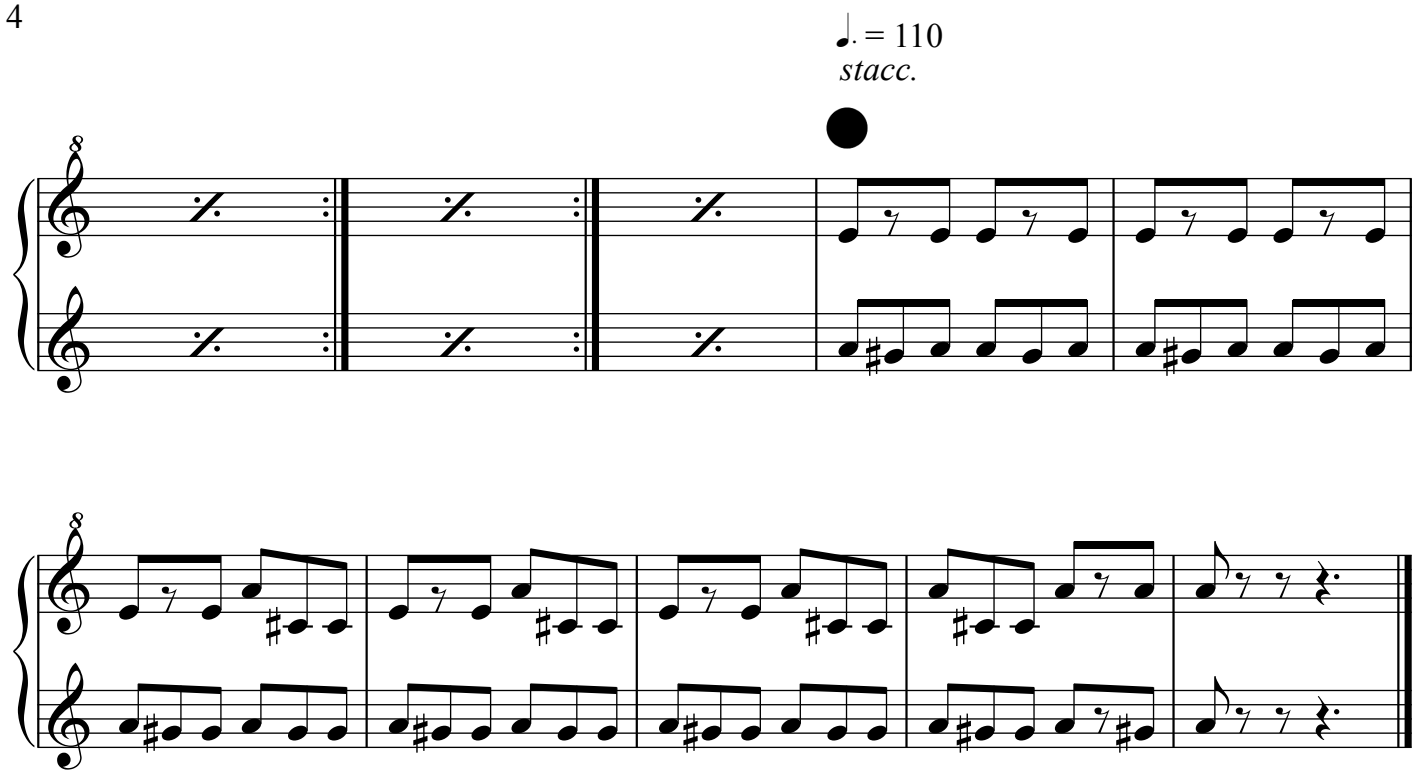
Don't You Want to Go to Heaven, Uncle Sam?



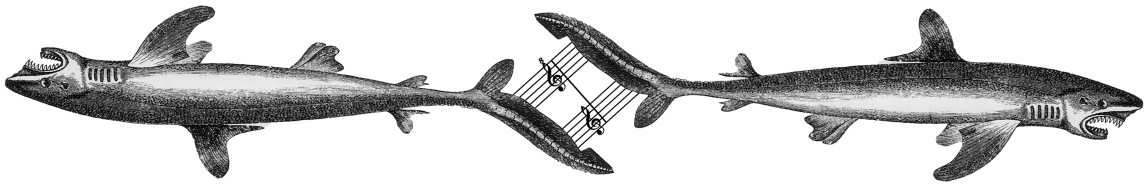
This is the first tune I wrote after receiving the thirty-button Anglo that I play today. The poco accellerando in the last system on the third page, which culminates in the allegro at the top of page four, should occur evenly over the course of the four repetitions.


mf
Andante ♩. = 80
1.2.3.
4.

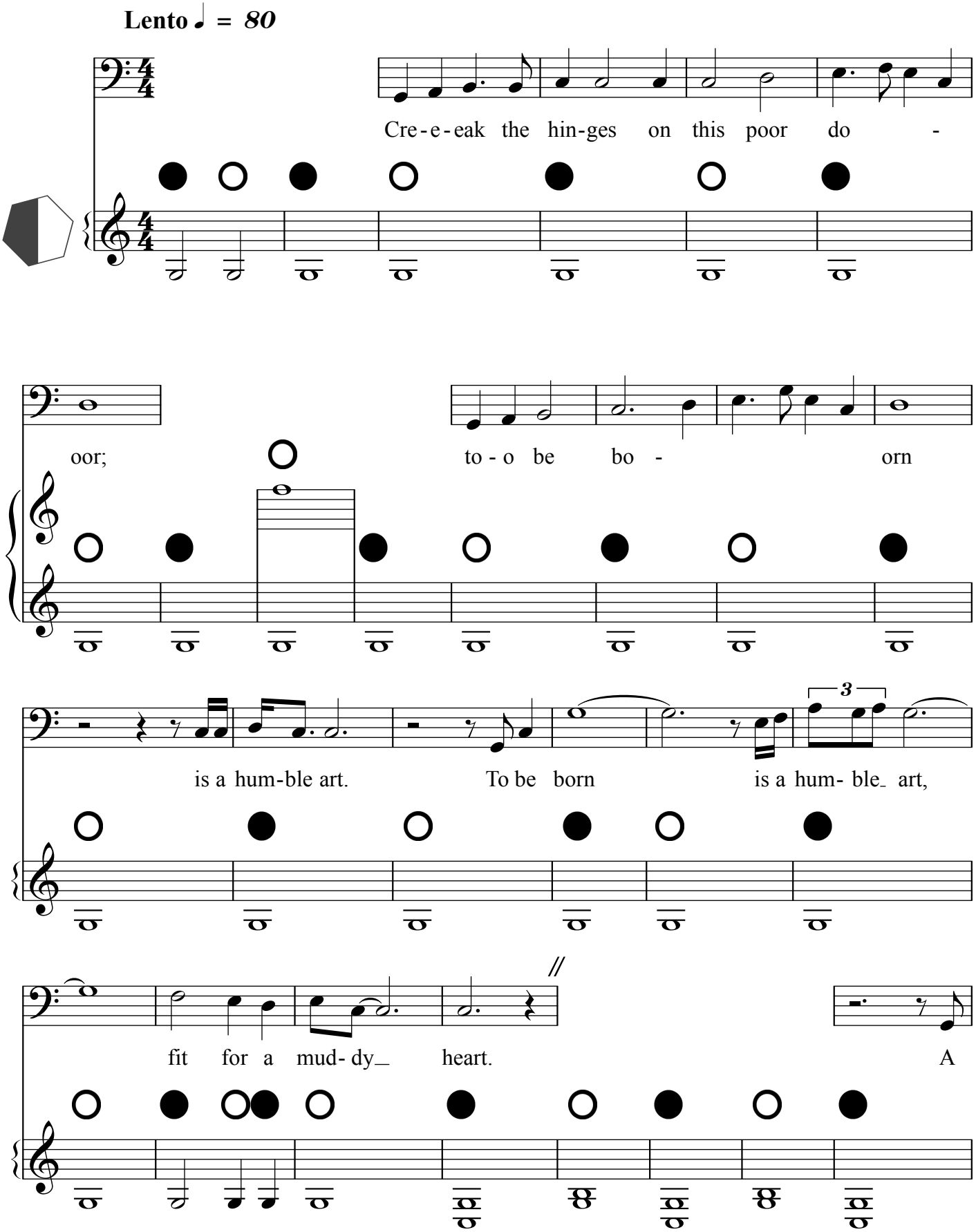

♩ = ♪
poco accel.

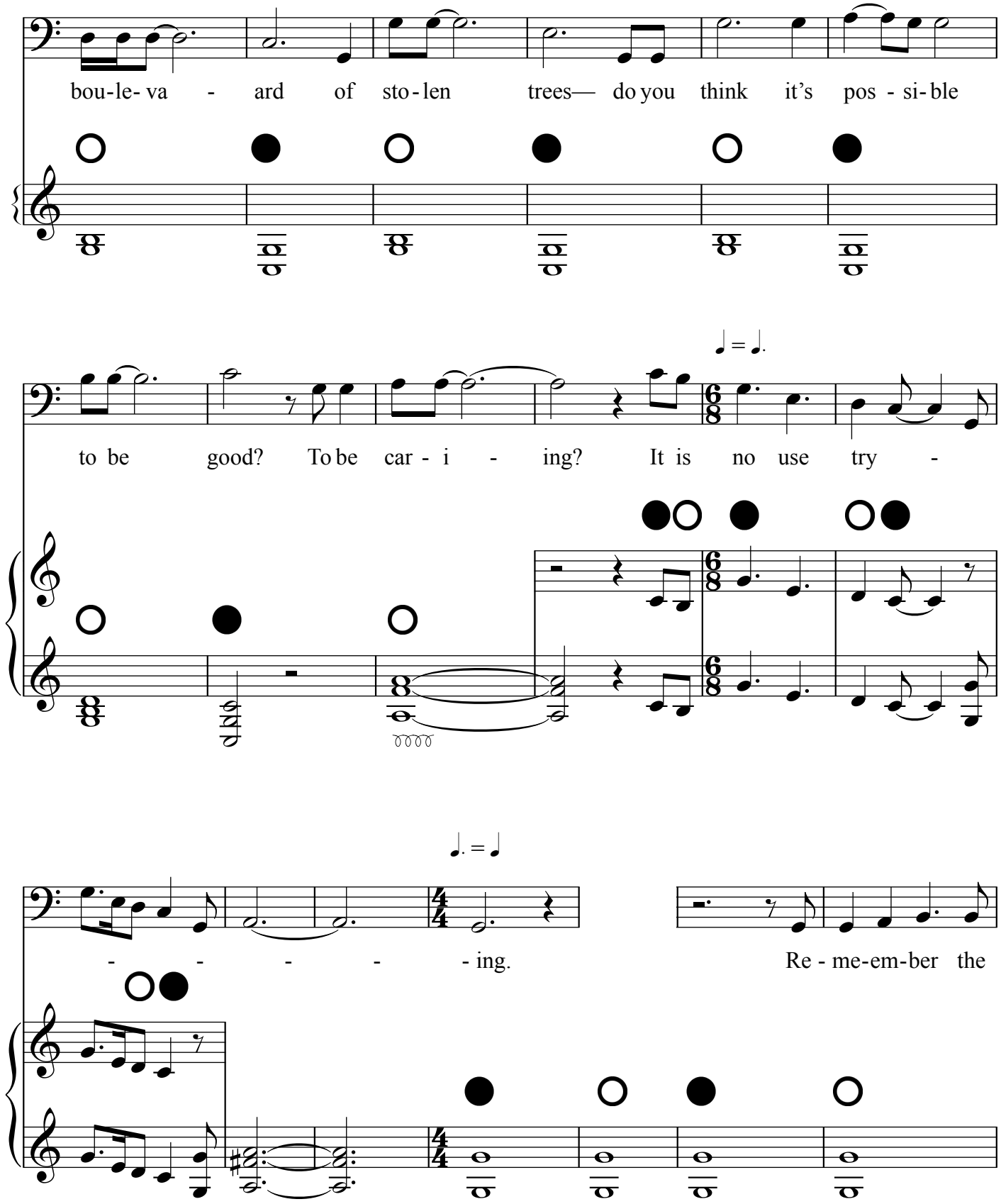

♩. = 110
stacc.

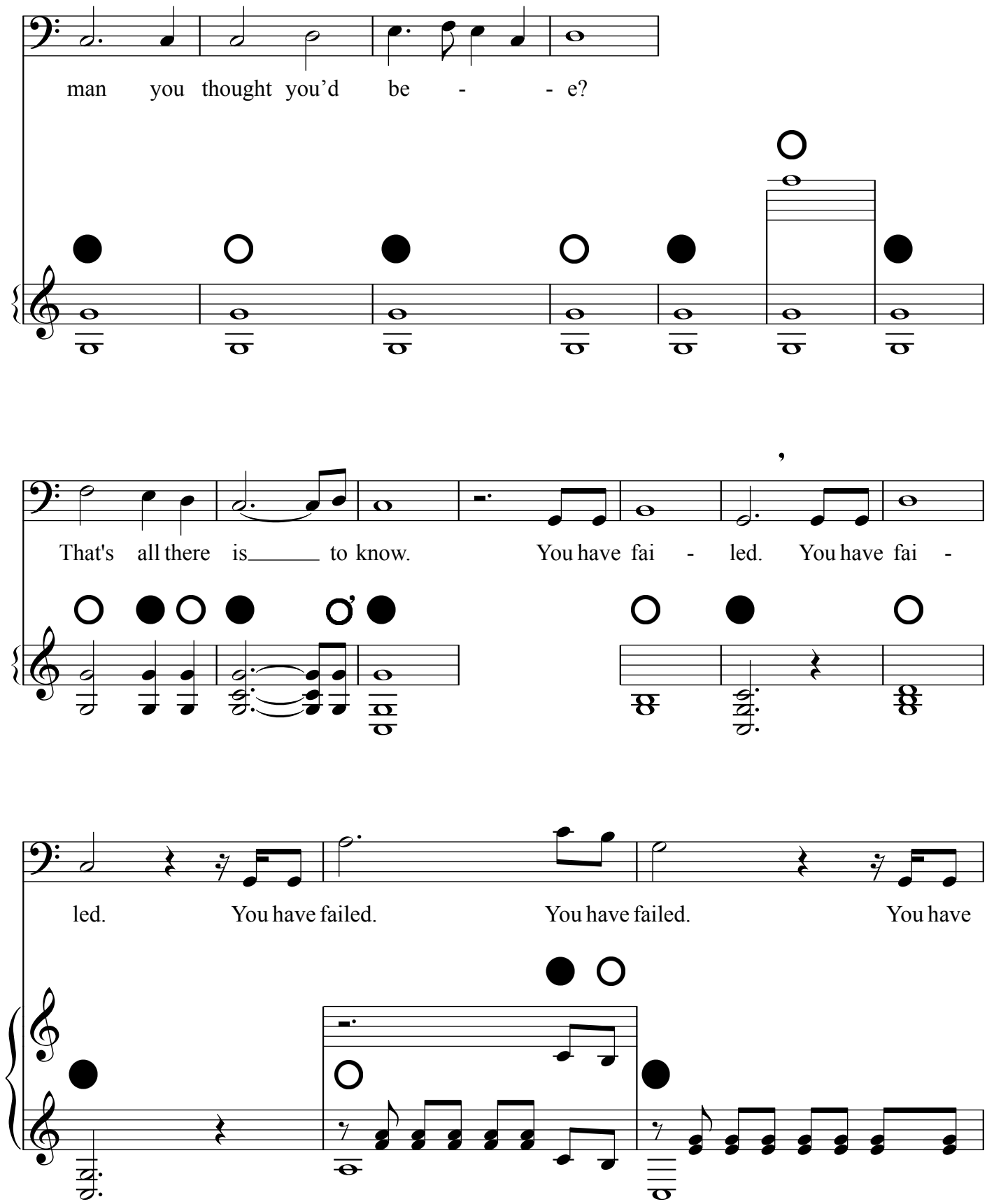
Muddy Heart

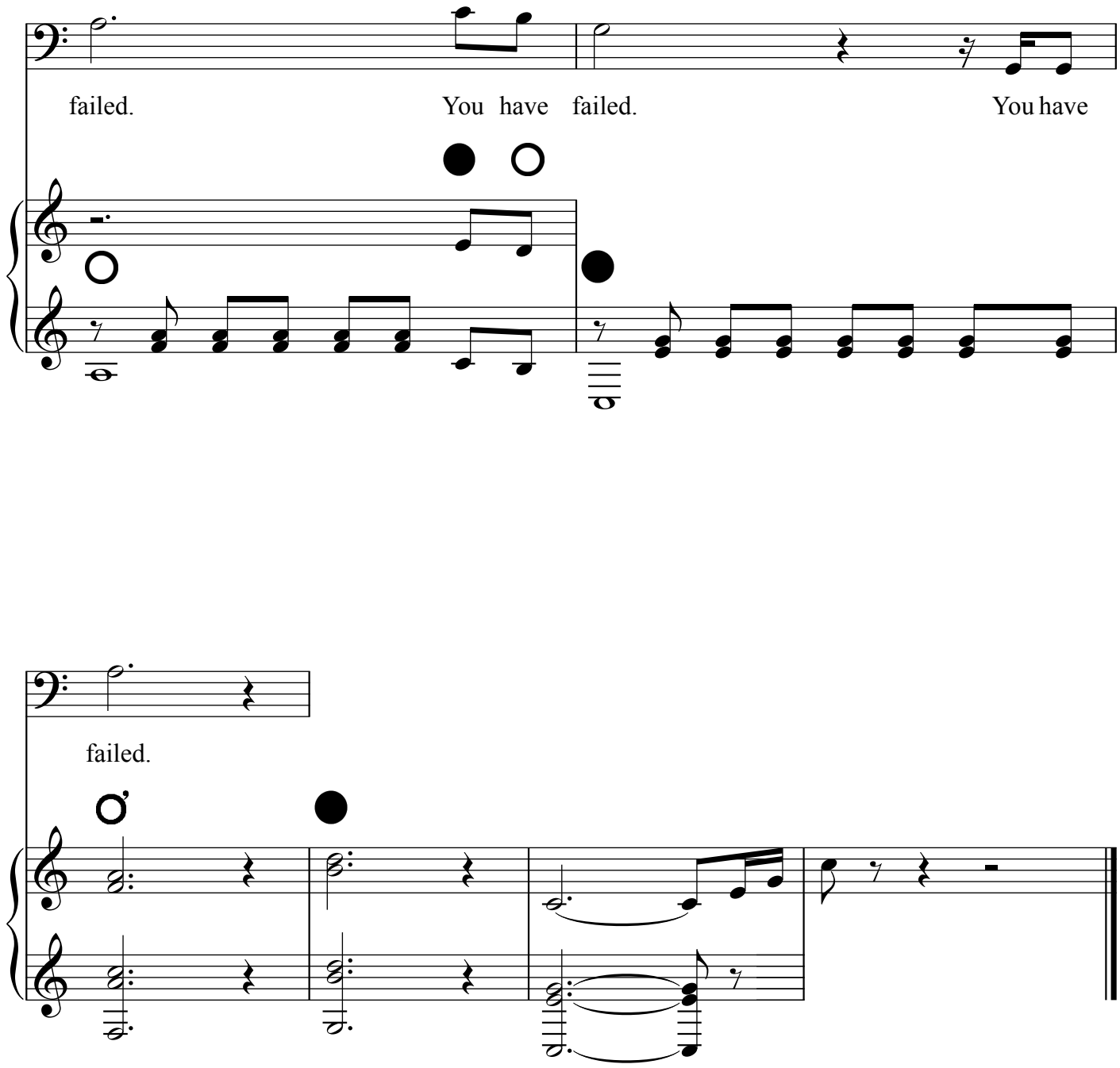


Bars that don't feature vocals should be played somewhat more quickly. Generally speaking, a pronounced rubato is effective throughout.

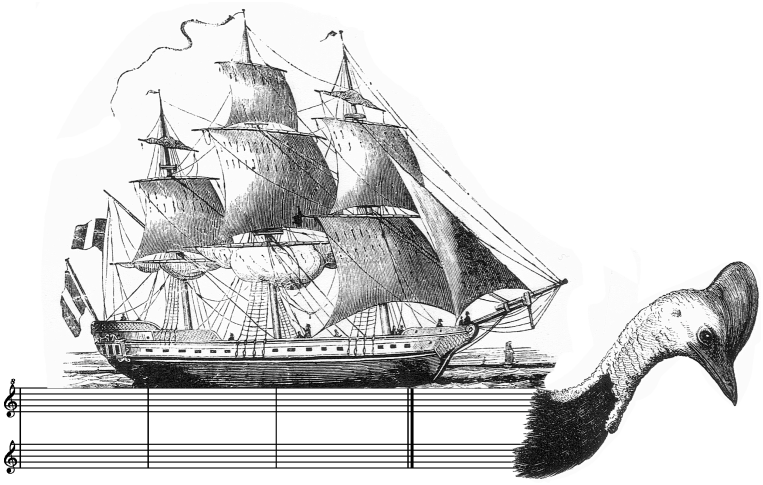

Lento ♩ = 80
Cre - e - eak the hin-ges on this poor do -
oor;
to - o be bo - orn
3
is a hum-ble art.
To be born
is a hum- ble_ art,
fit for a mud- dy_ heart.
A


bou-le-va - ard of sto-len trees— do you think it's pos - si-ble
to be good? To be car - i - ing? It is no use try -
- - - - - ing.
Re - me-em-ber the

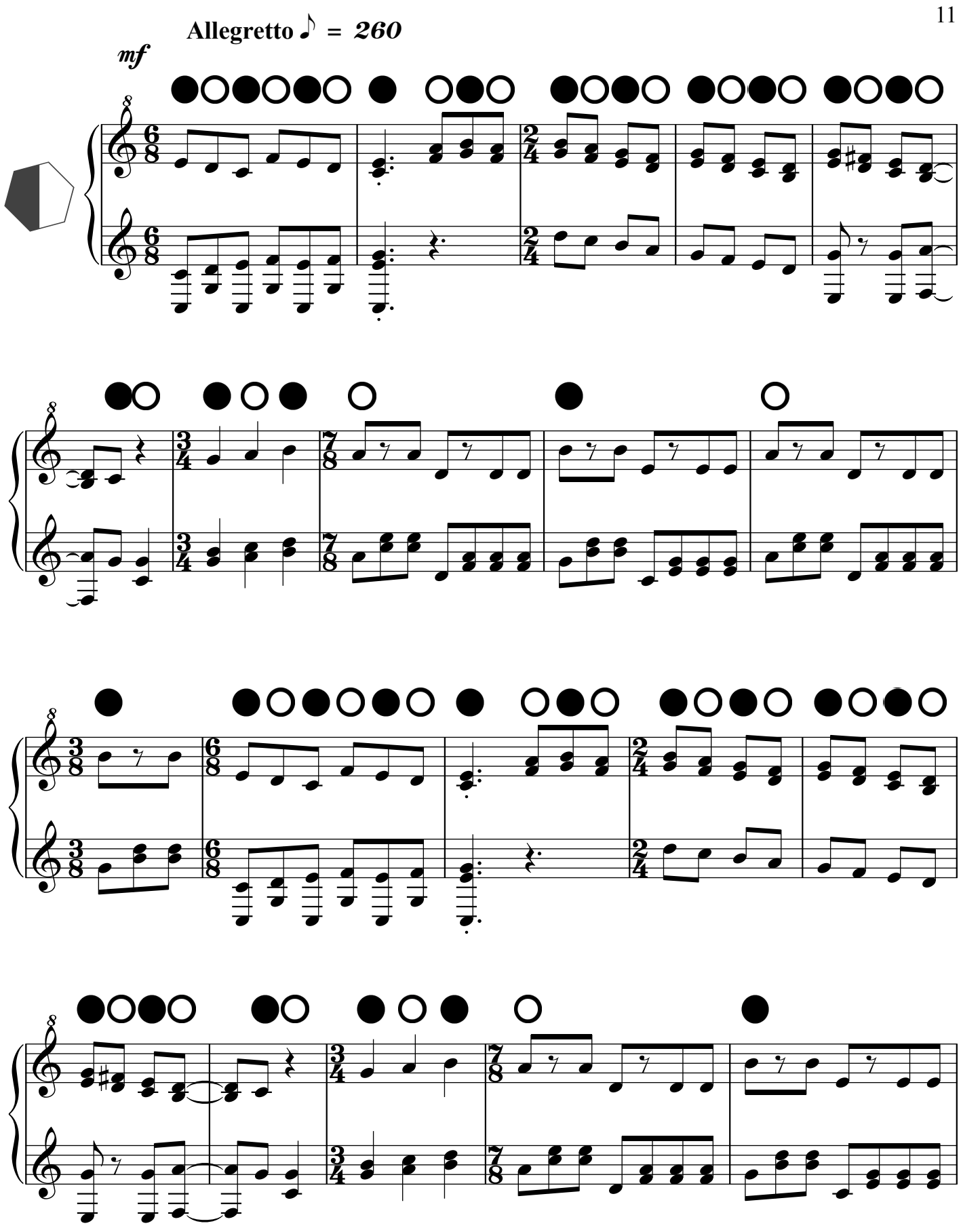

man you thought you'd be - - e?
That's all there is to know. You have fai - led. You have fai -
led. You have failed. You have failed. You have

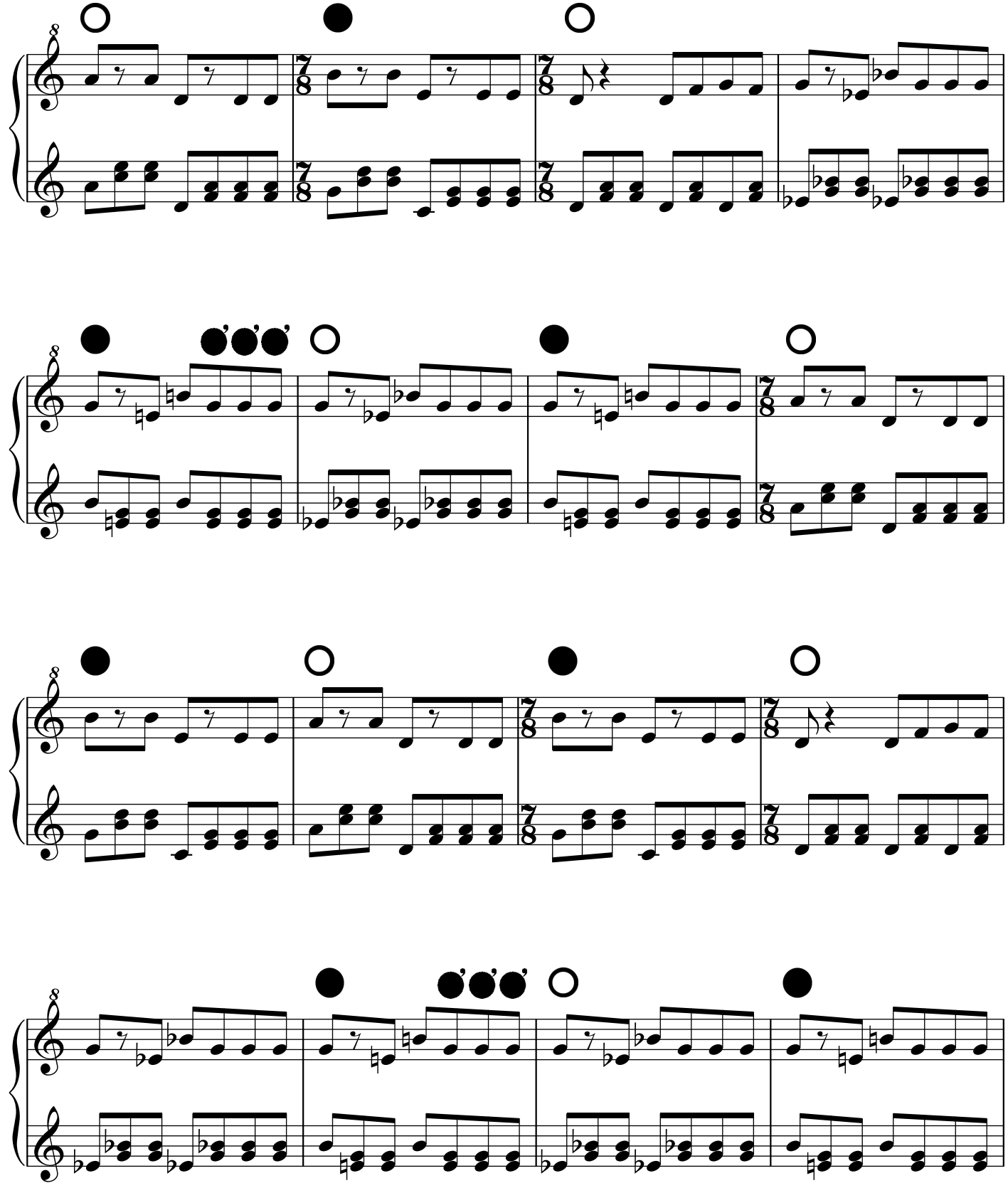

failed.
You have failed.
You have
failed.

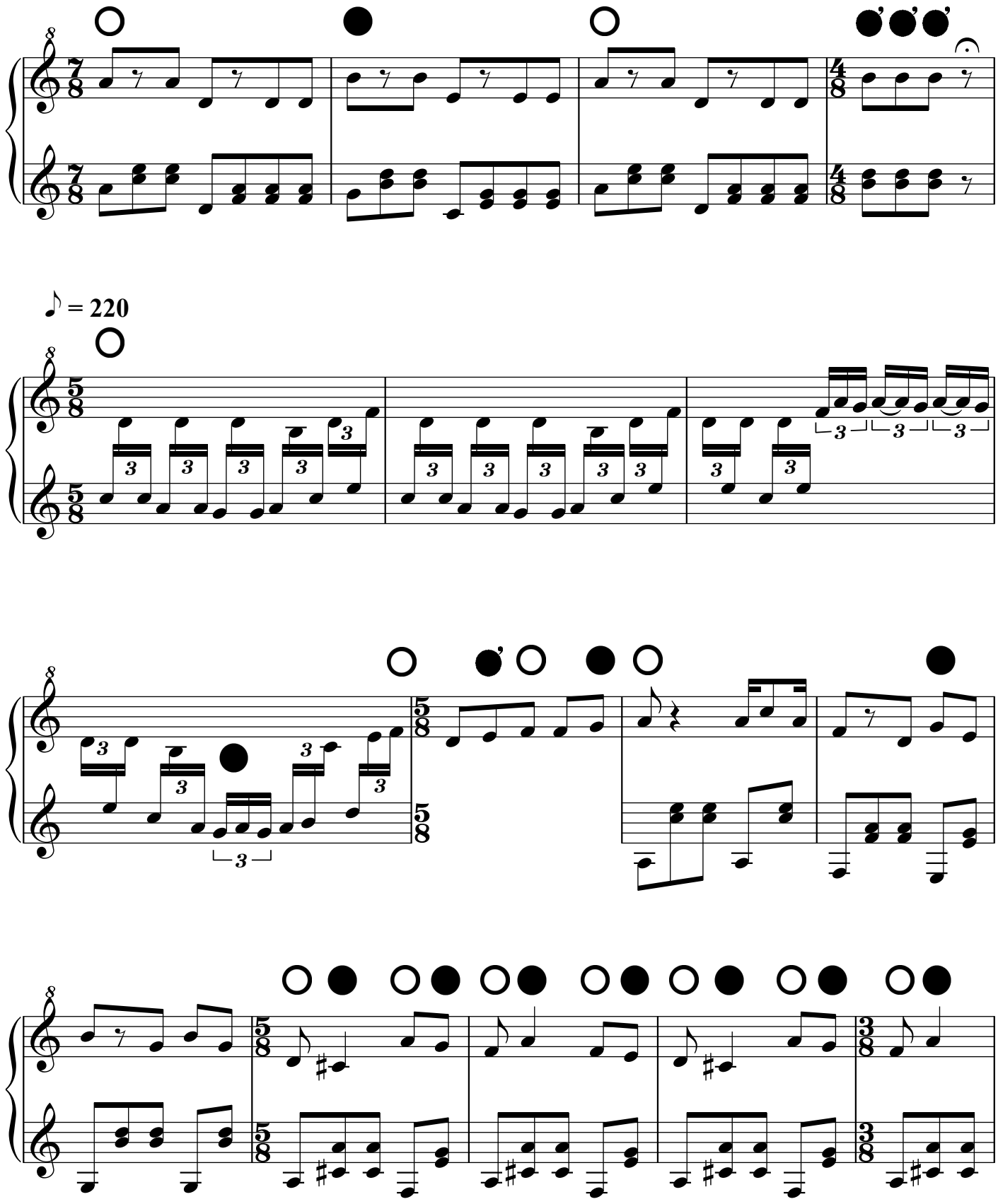
The Devil's Dreamworld

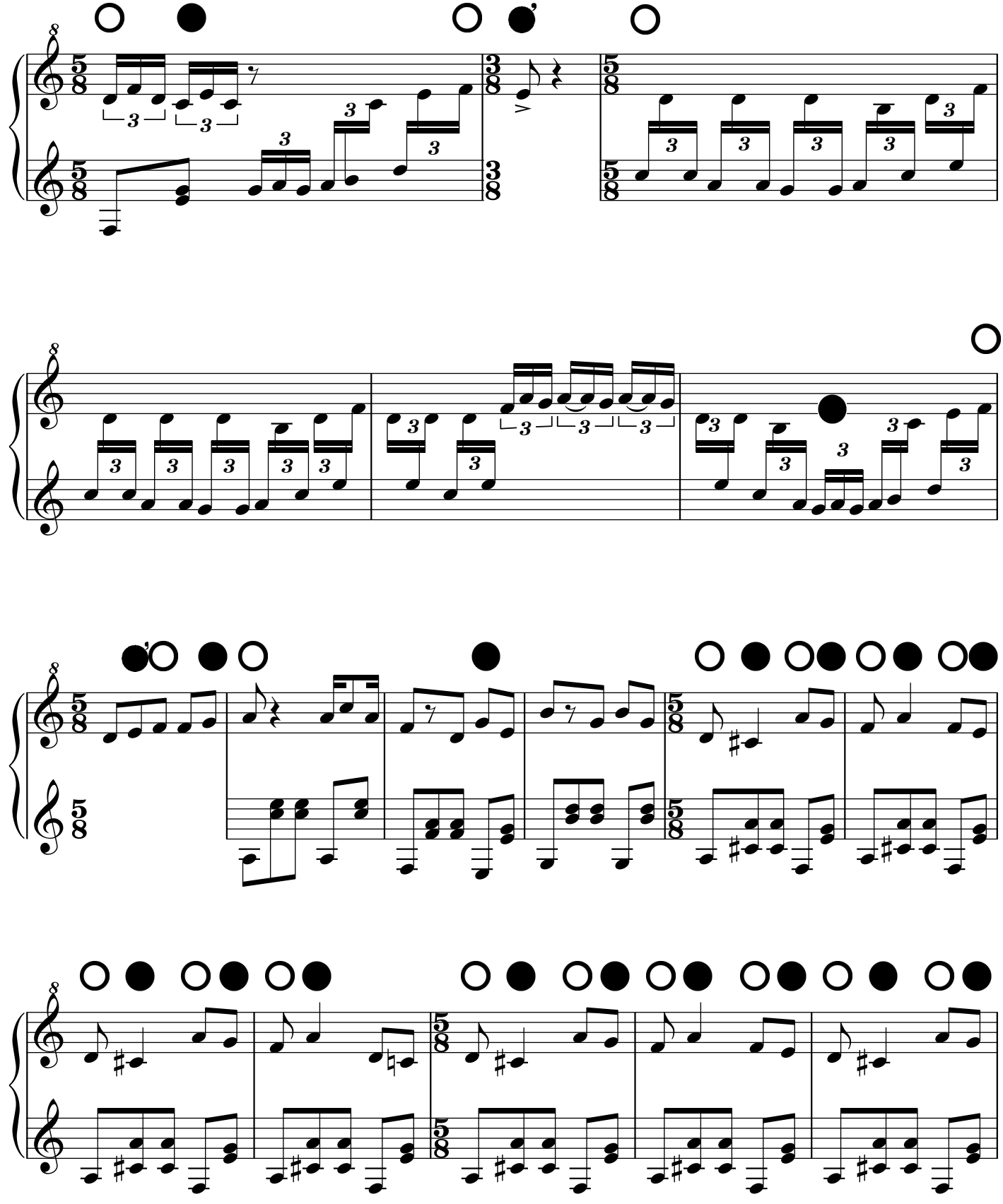


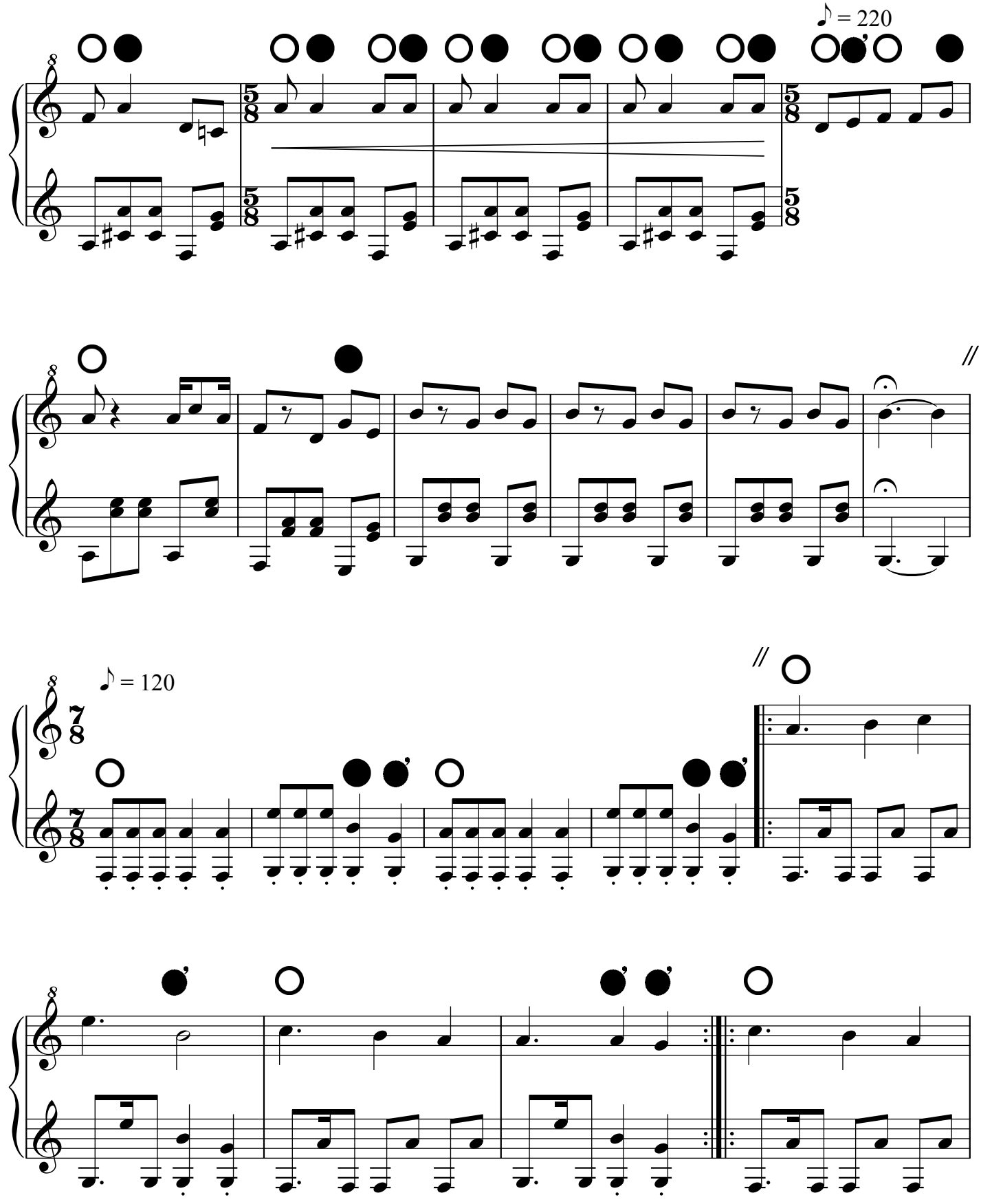
I chose to make the penultimate E chord major because I thought the devil deserved a little happiness. The metronome markings throughout need not be strictly adhered to; hew to your own sense of playability for those changes.

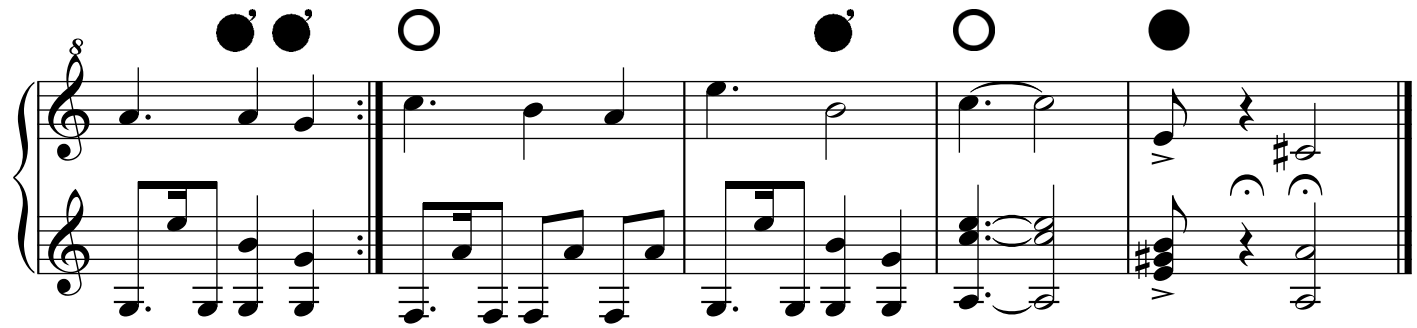

Allegretto ♪ = 260
mf




♪ = 220




♪ = 220
♪ = 120



A Medley of Old Songs

Wheelbarrow
Swiftly to Your Leisure
Tip the Hat
Goodbye, Boys and Girls
The Bellamy Club
Goodbye, Boys and Girls (reprise)

The "old songs" here were all written for this medley. I ended each tune with a double barline and some blank space, but no pause should be interjected beyond what's denoted in the music. Additionally, if the bellows direction remains the same for the beginning of the new tune, I haven't supplied a bellows directional (as is the case for the beginning of "The Bellamy Club").

Edward Bellamy, in thrall to the possibilities of both socialism and industrialization, wrote a book in 1887 called *Looking Backward*, in which a man from that time is catapulted forward into the year 2000. In this utopic future, mass production has populated the world with a surplus of everything and has largely superannuated human labor. The book was an enormous success in the U.S. and many "Bellamy clubs" were started, with the goal of realizing this vision of the future. The specific clubs I've read about, however, have seemed more broadly based on cooperative principles (such as cooking co-ops), and contain little evidence of Bellamy's faith in the factory as an anodyne for the ills of his world.

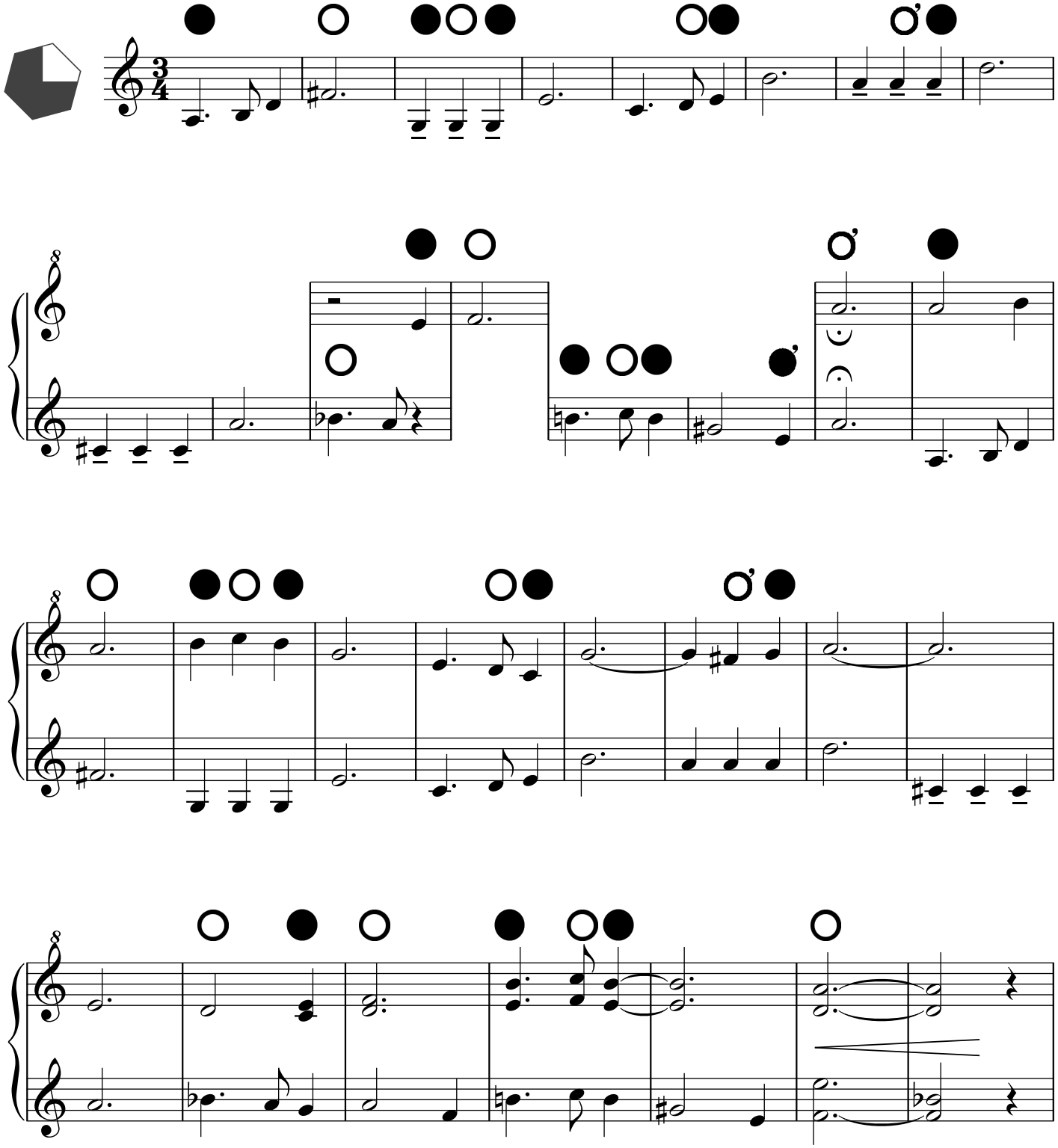
William Morris, progenitor of the arts and crafts movement in England, was so repulsed by *Looking Backward*, that he wrote his own socialist utopian future as a refutation of it, titled *News from Nowhere*.

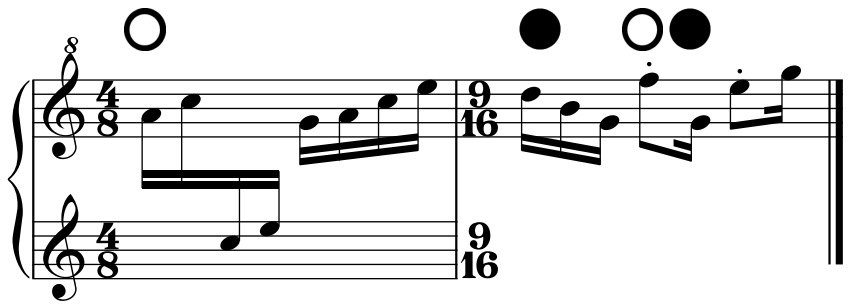
Edward's cousin Francis, also a socialist, is remembered by history as the author of the U.S.'s Pledge of Allegiance, which he penned in 1892 as part of a marketing scheme to sell flags to schools.

Wheel Barrow

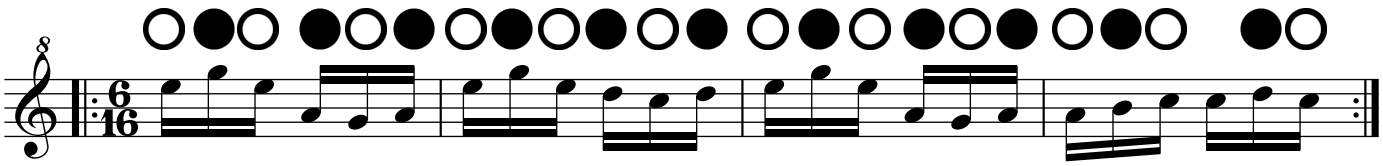
Andante ♩ = *100*

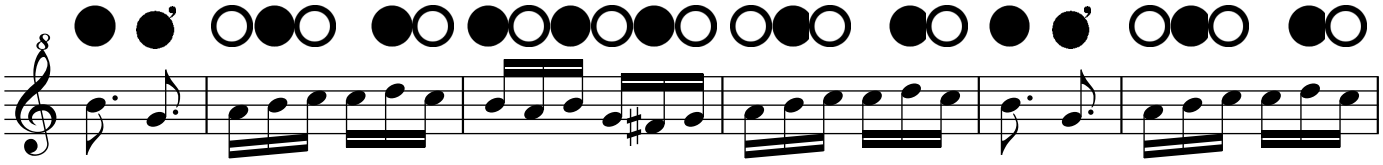
mf

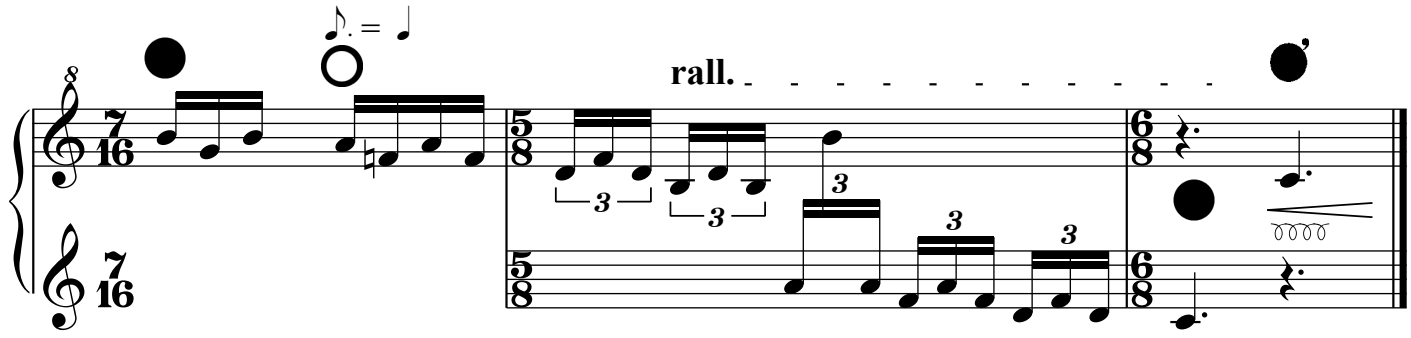




Swiftly to Your Leisure

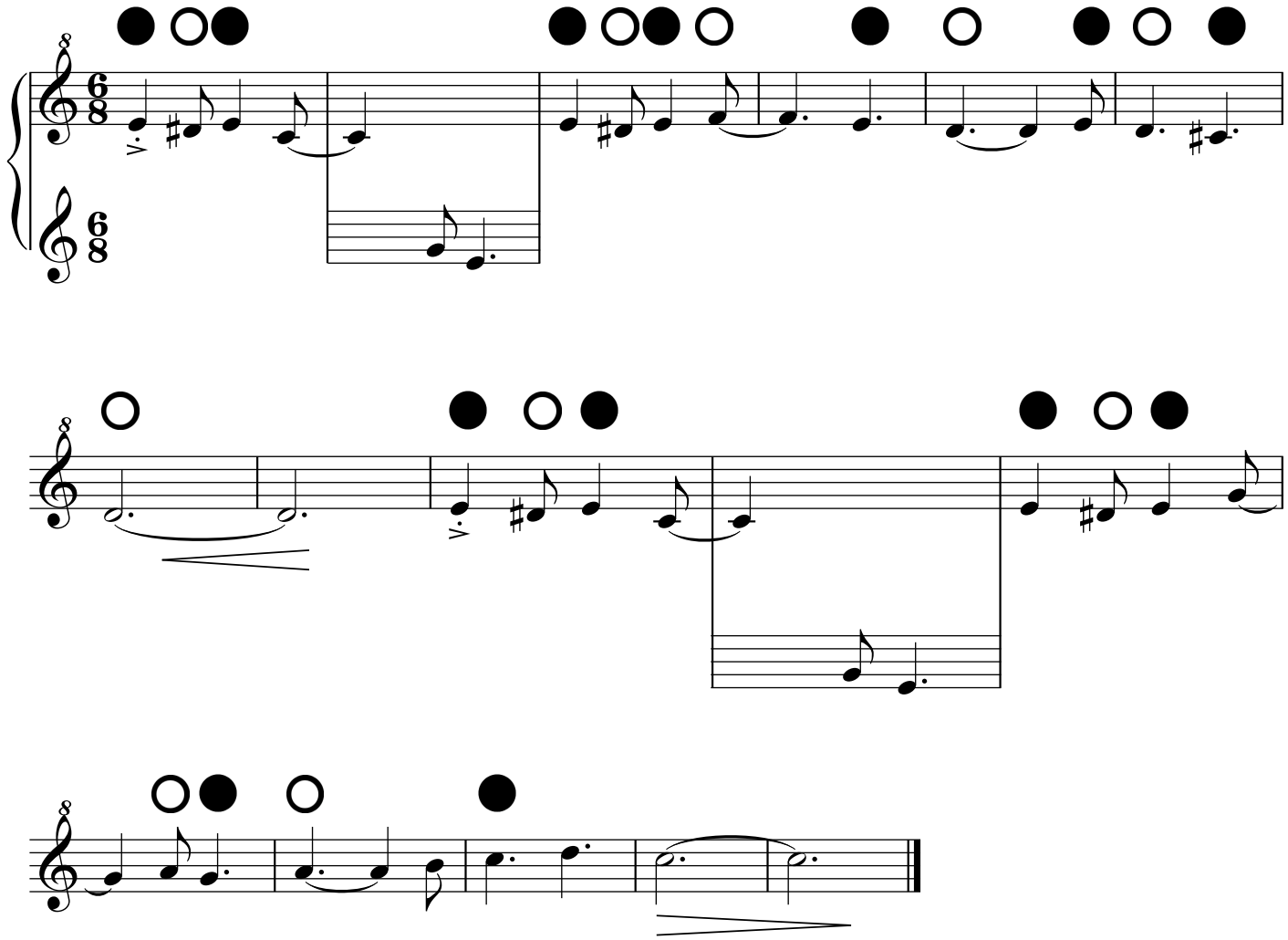






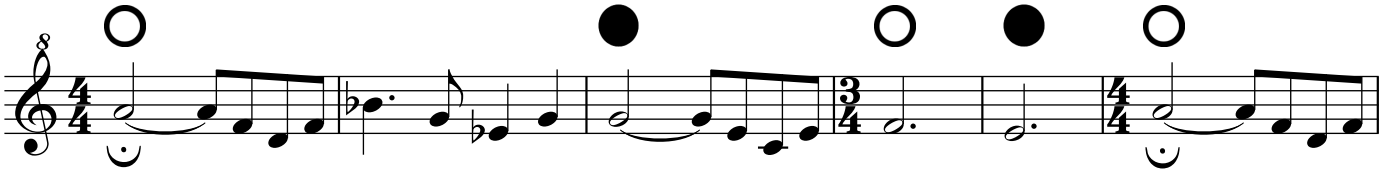
Tip the Hat

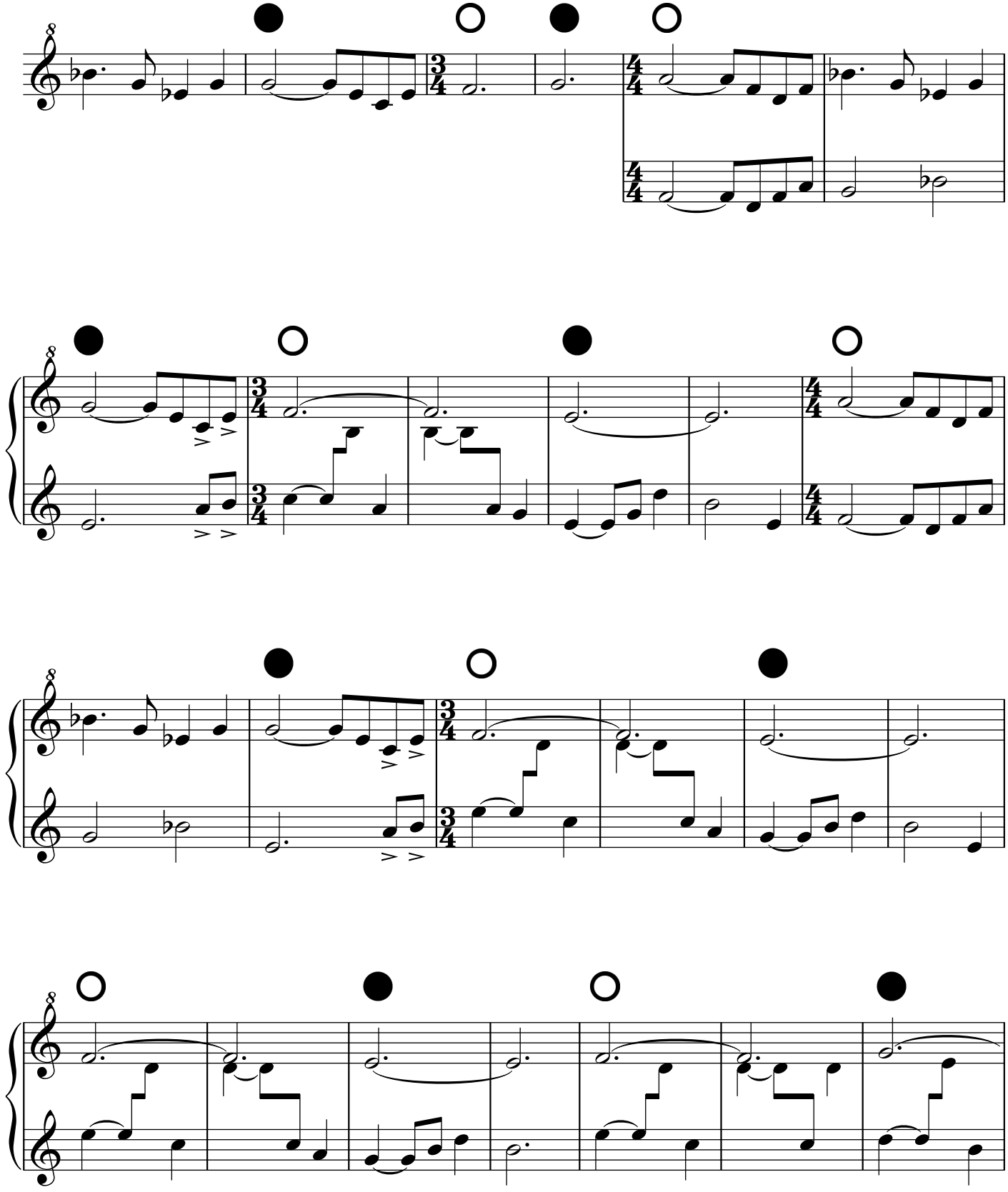
Con brio ♩. = ***130***

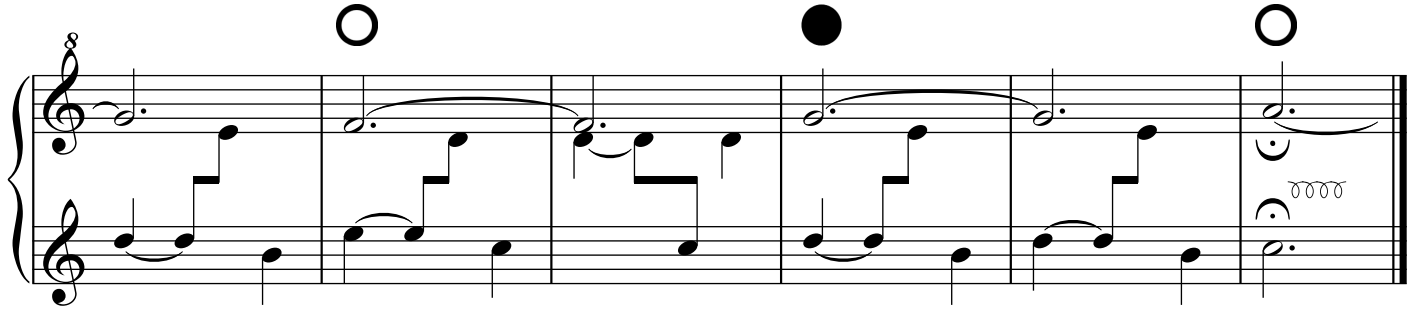


Goodbye, Boys and Girls

Grave ♩ = ***90***

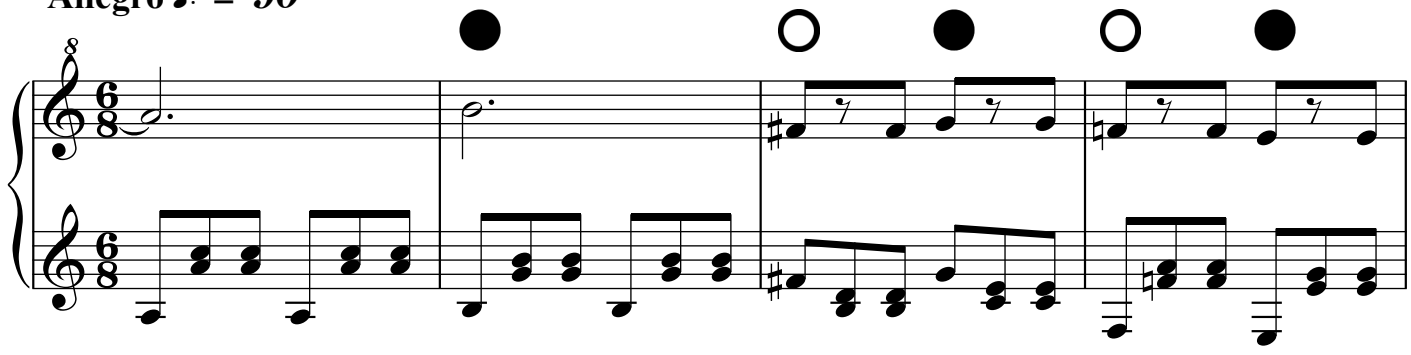


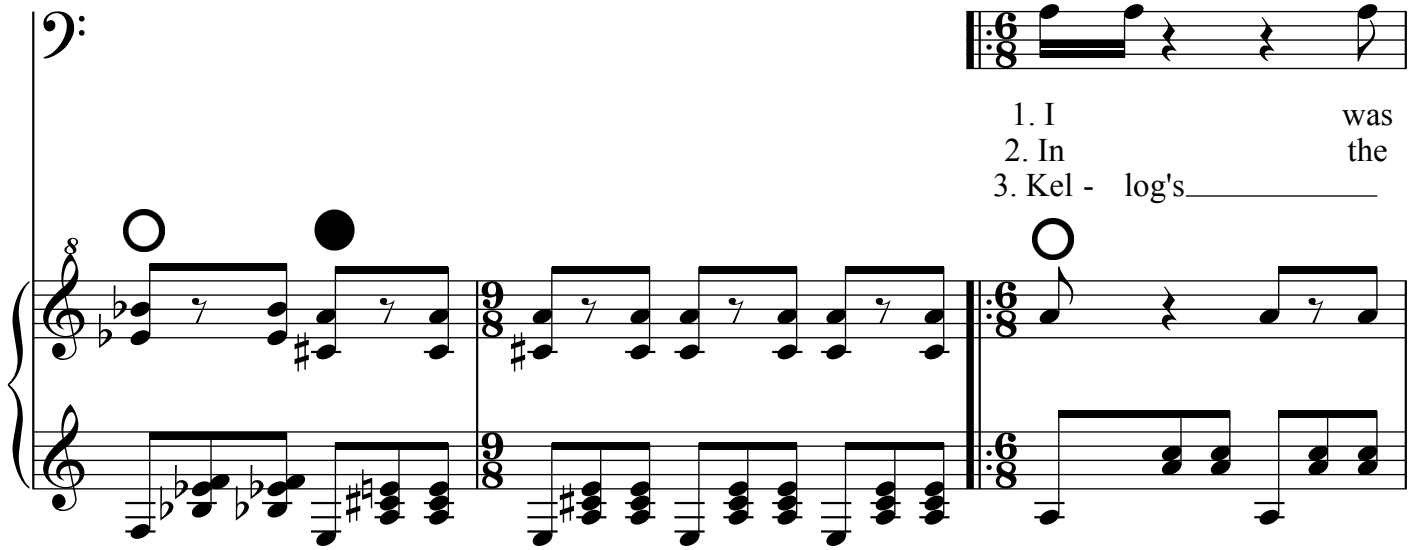


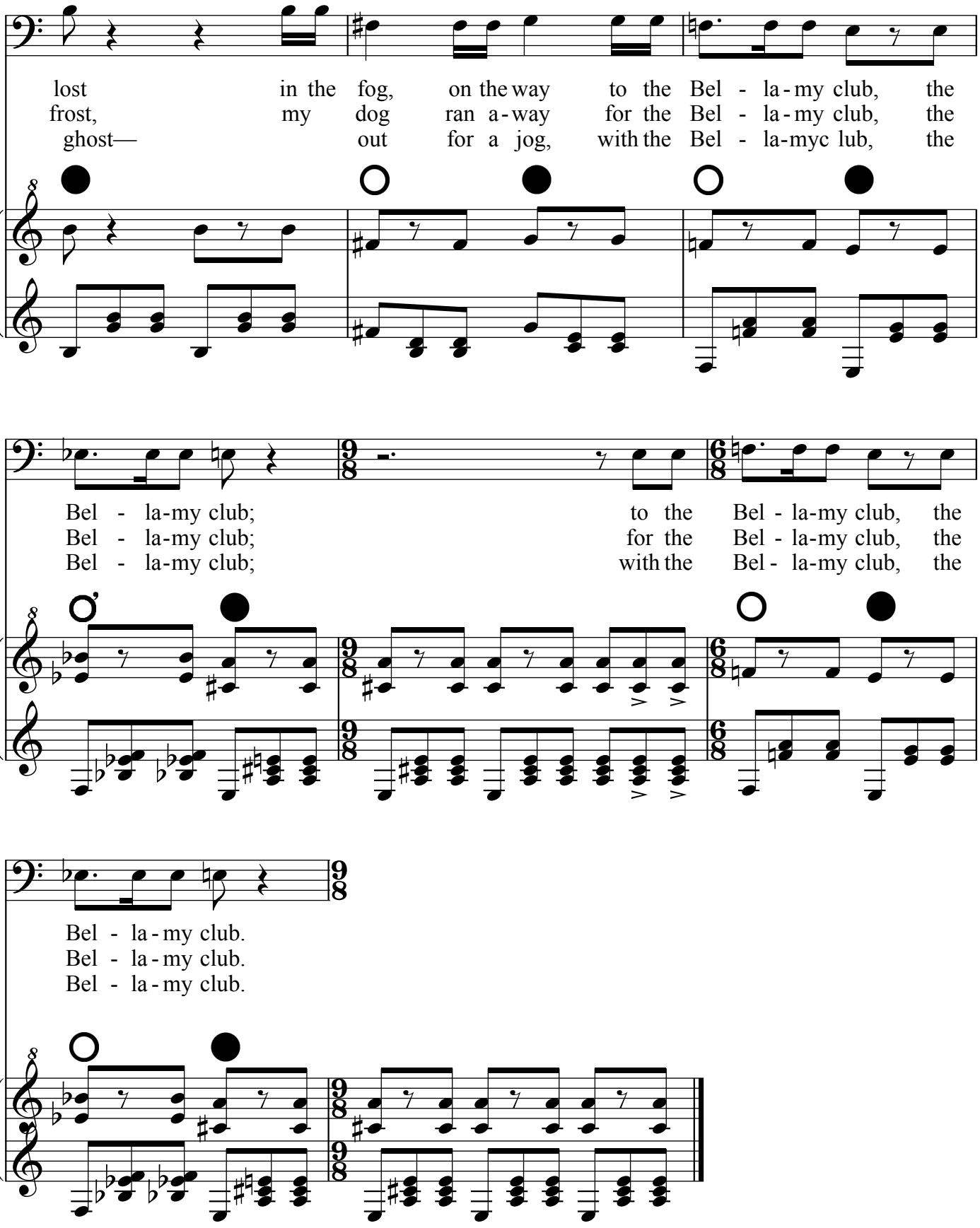


The Bellamy Club

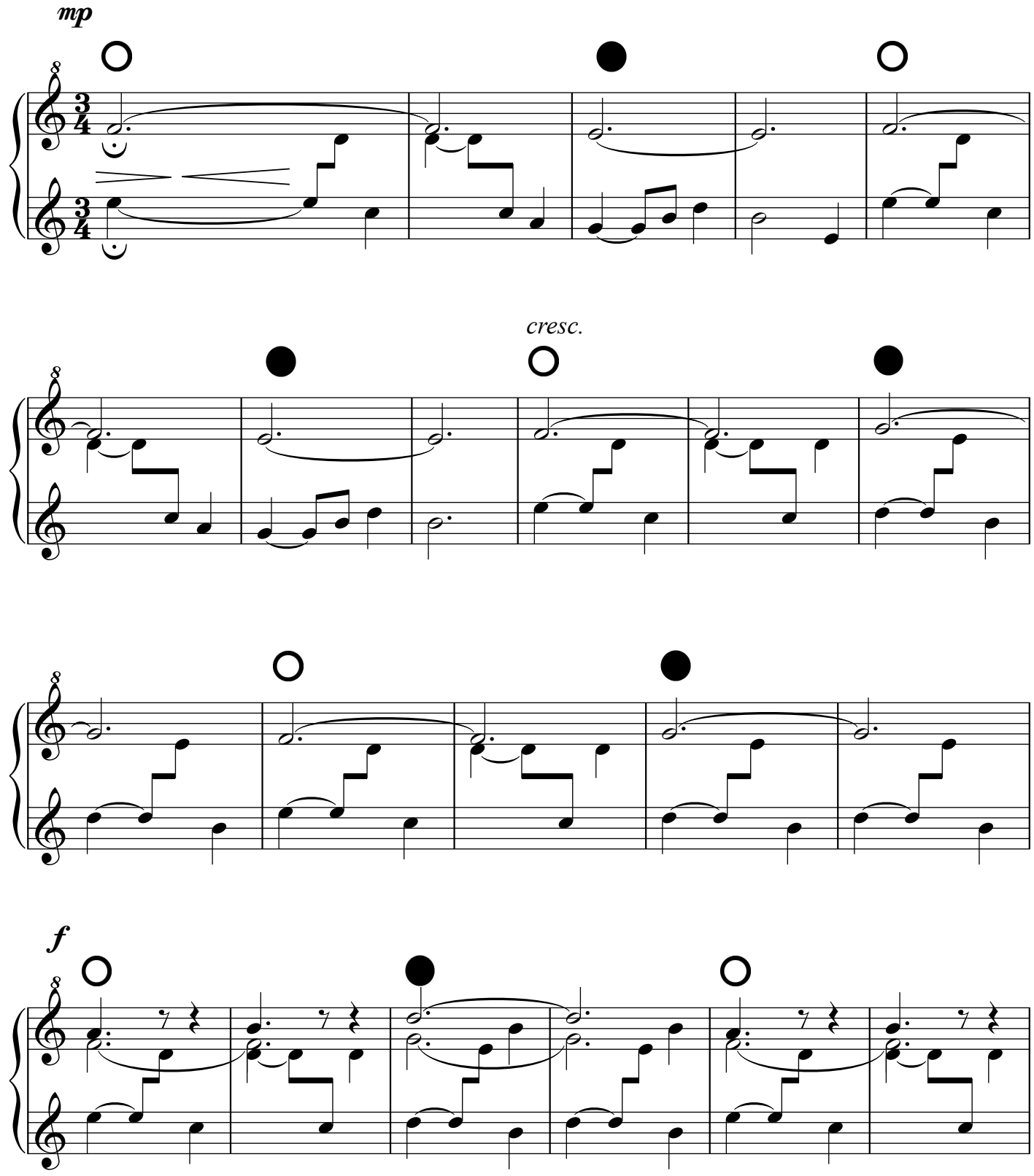
Allegro ♩. = *90*

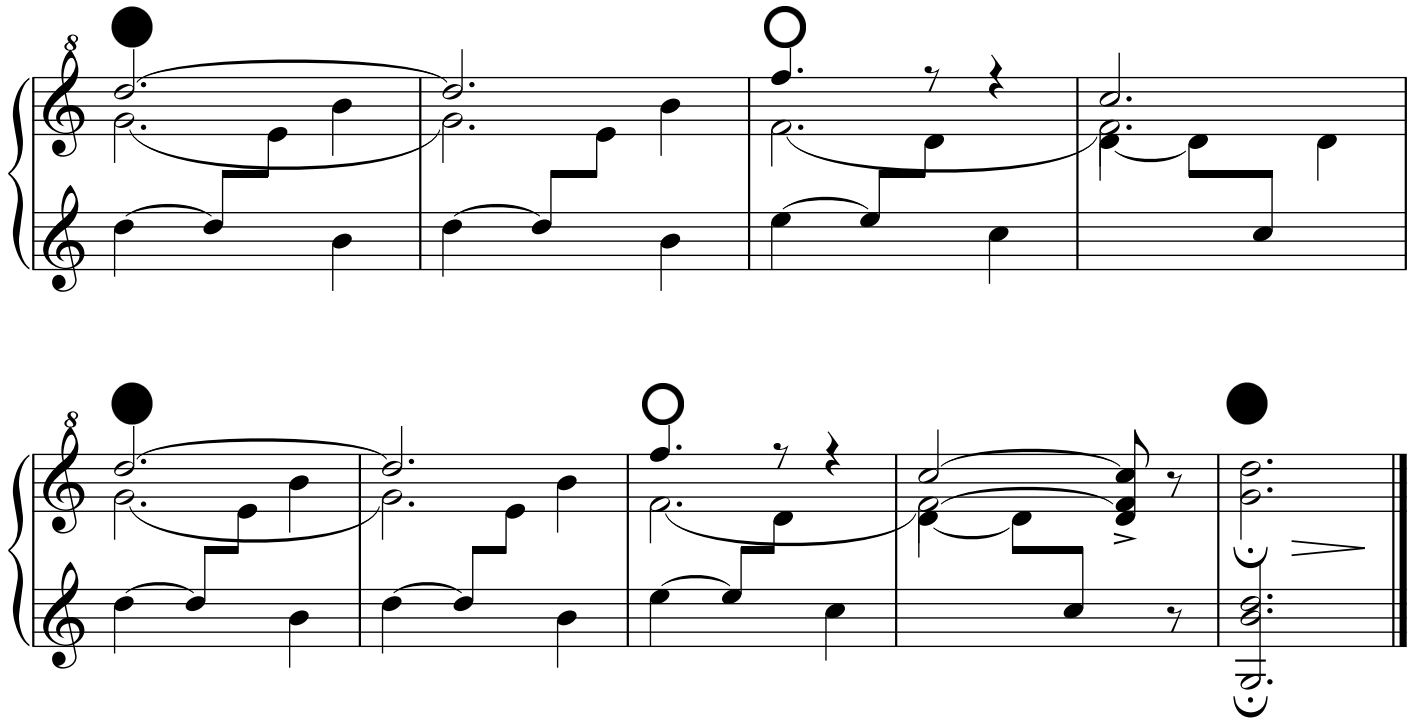




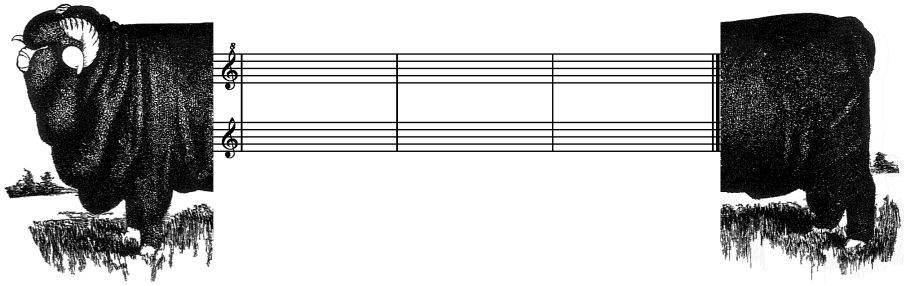

lost in the fog, on the way to the Bel - la-my club, the
frost, my dog ran a-way for the Bel - la-my club, the
ghost— out for a jog, with the Bel - la-myc lub, the
Bel - la-my club; to the Bel - la-my club, the
Bel - la-my club; for the Bel - la-my club, the
Bel - la-my club; with the Bel - la-my club, the
Bel - la-my club.
Bel - la-my club.
Bel - la-my club.

Goodbye, Boys and Girls (reprise)

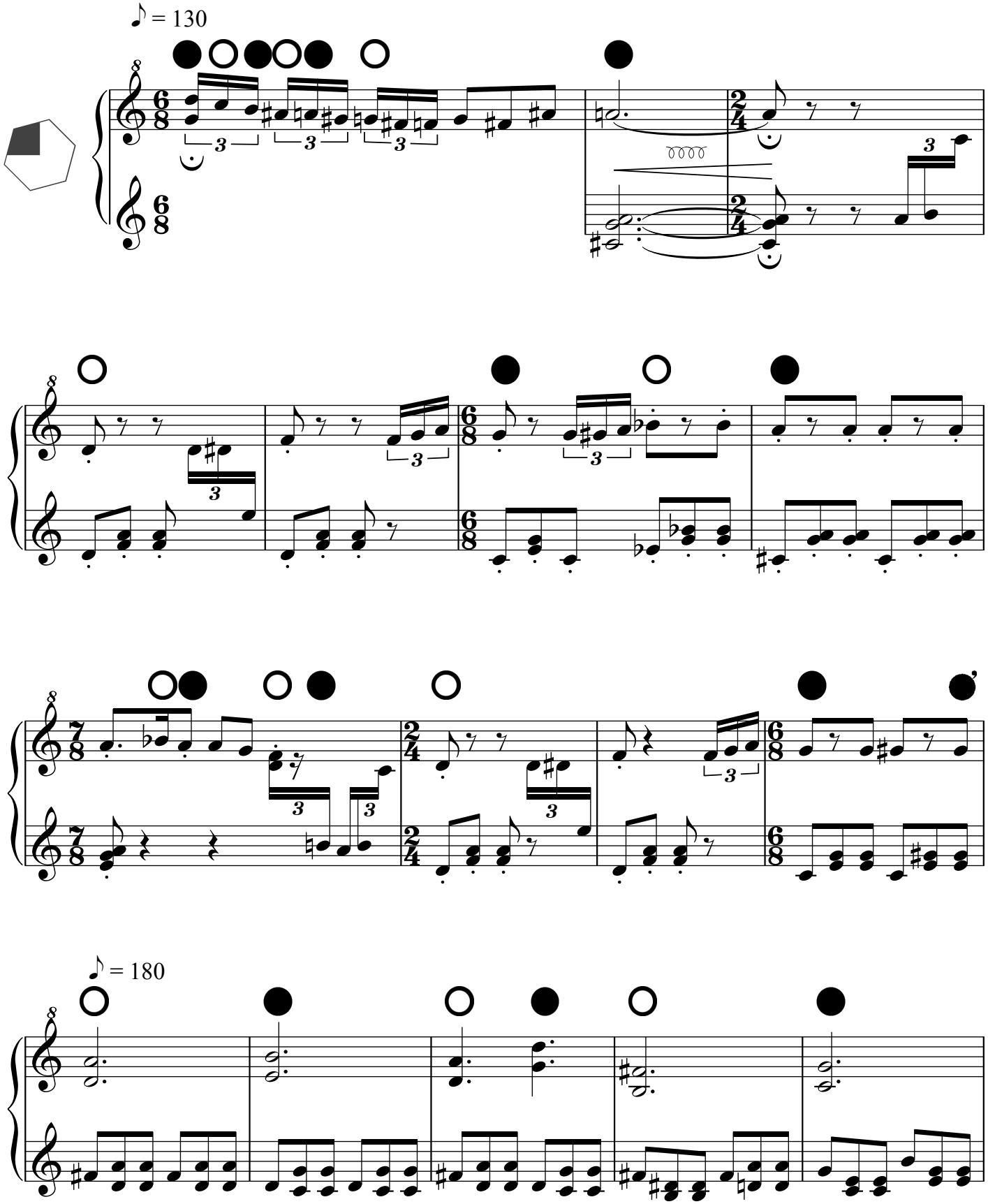


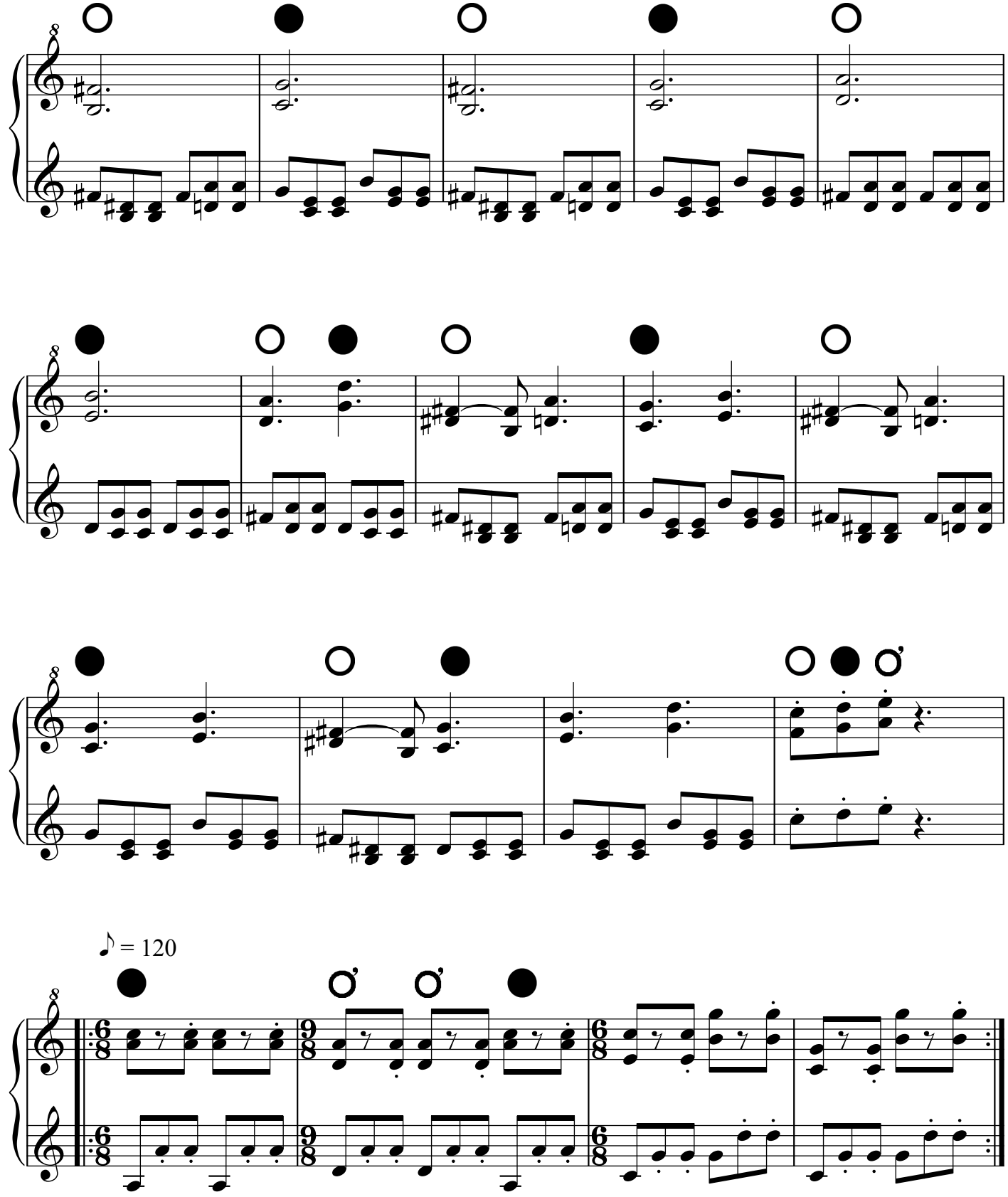


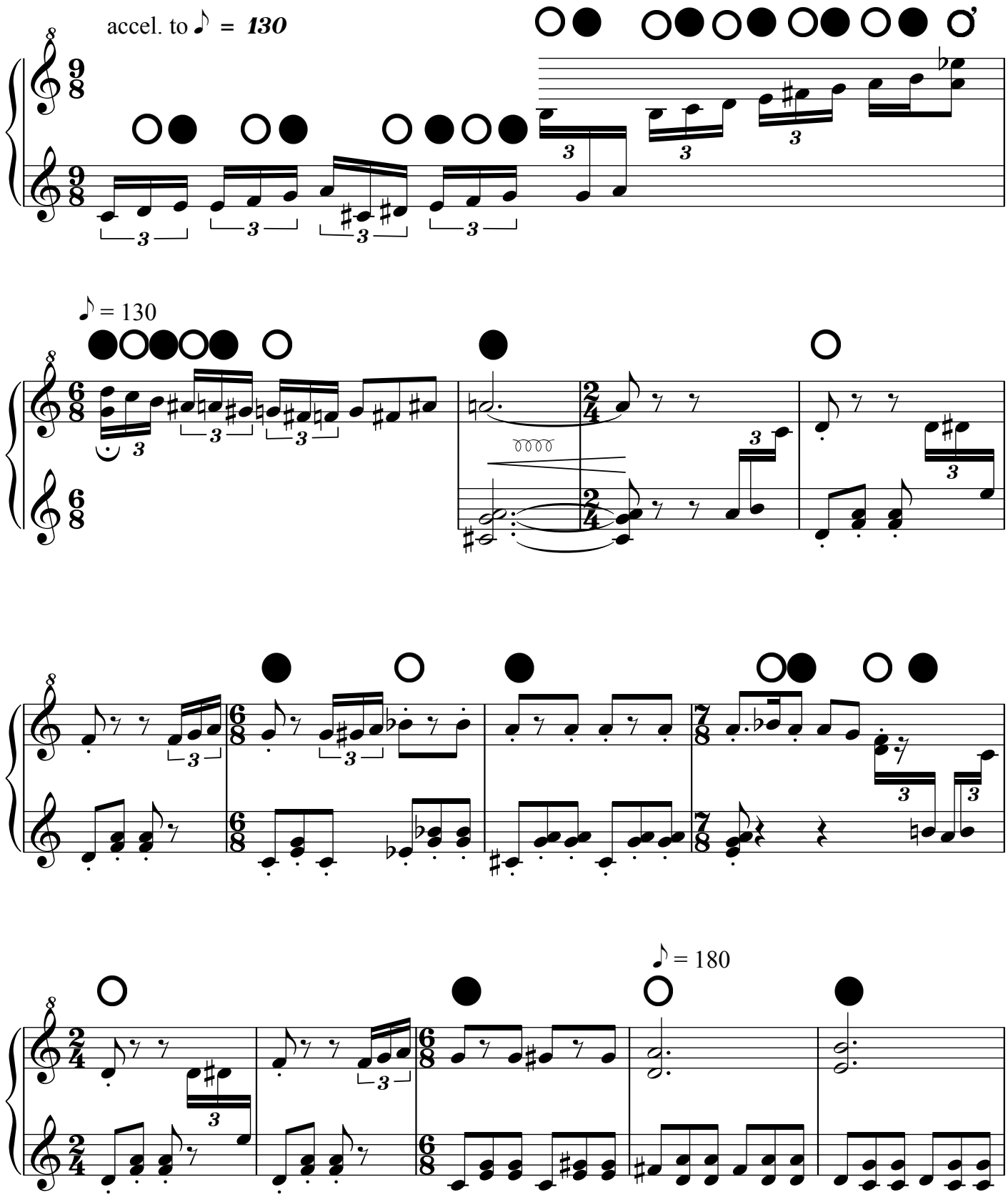
Beecher's Bibles

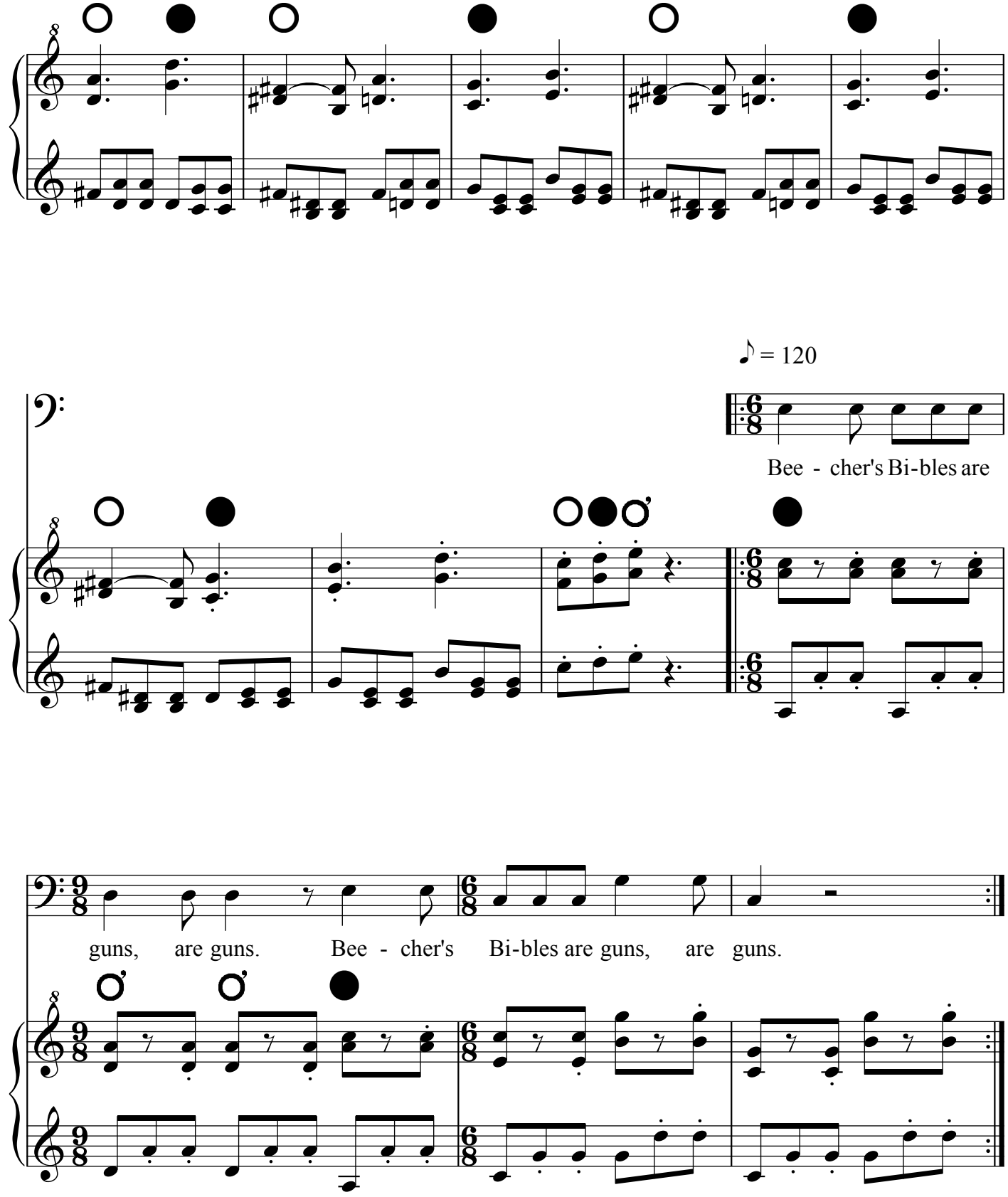


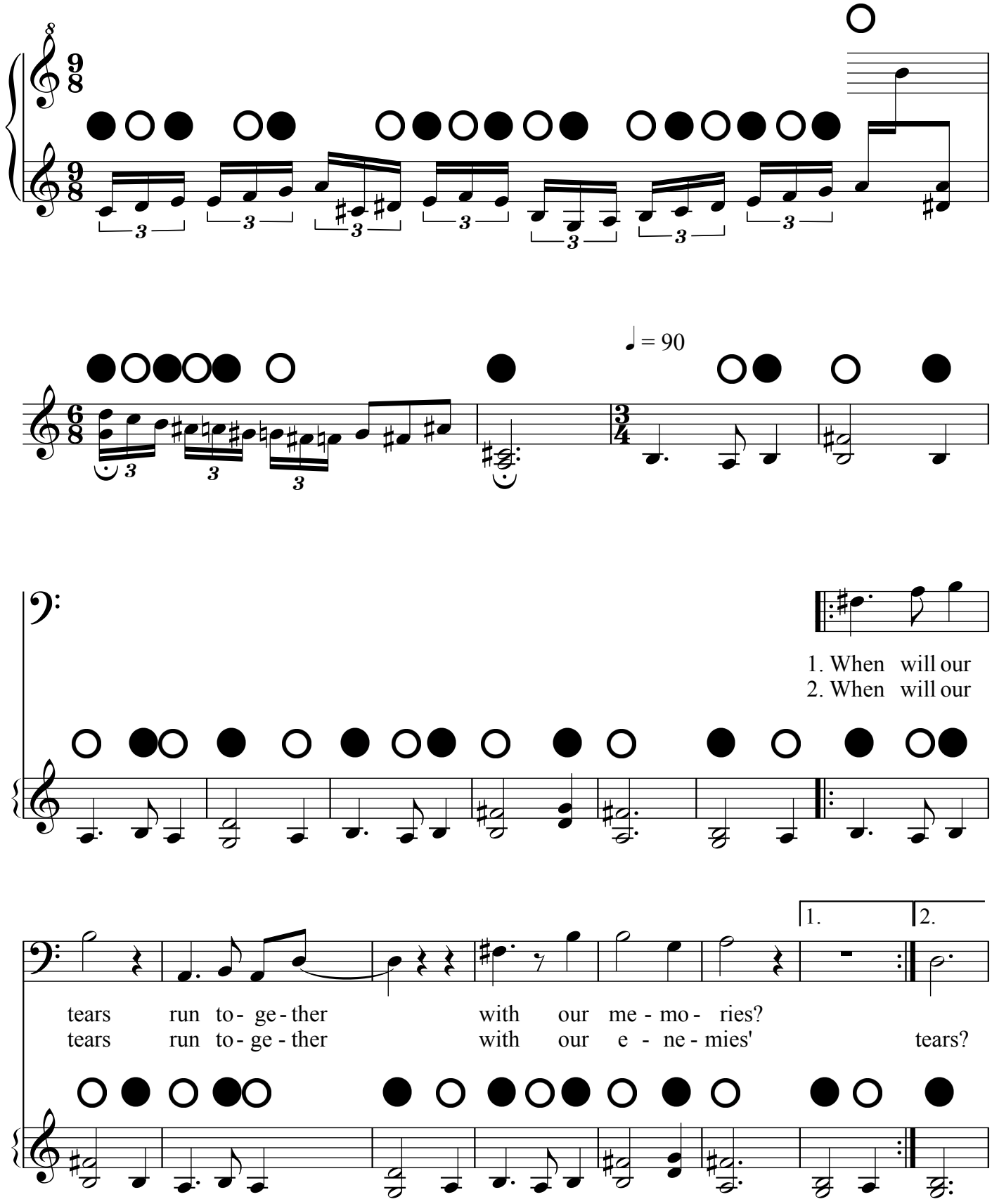
The Beecher to whose bibles the title alludes is Henry Ward Beecher, younger brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Beecher was an outspoken abolitionist minister in the years leading up to the Civil War. Months before the war began, Kansas was set to enter the Union (it became the thirty-fourth state in January, 1861). It was decided, as was then typical, that popular sovereignty would determine whether Kansas would be a slave state or a free one, through a vote. This caused a flood of immigration, of both abolitionists and slavers, all hoping to pack the ballot box. Henry Ward Beecher aided the abolitionist cause by raising money for rifles, which came to be known as "Beecher's Bibles."

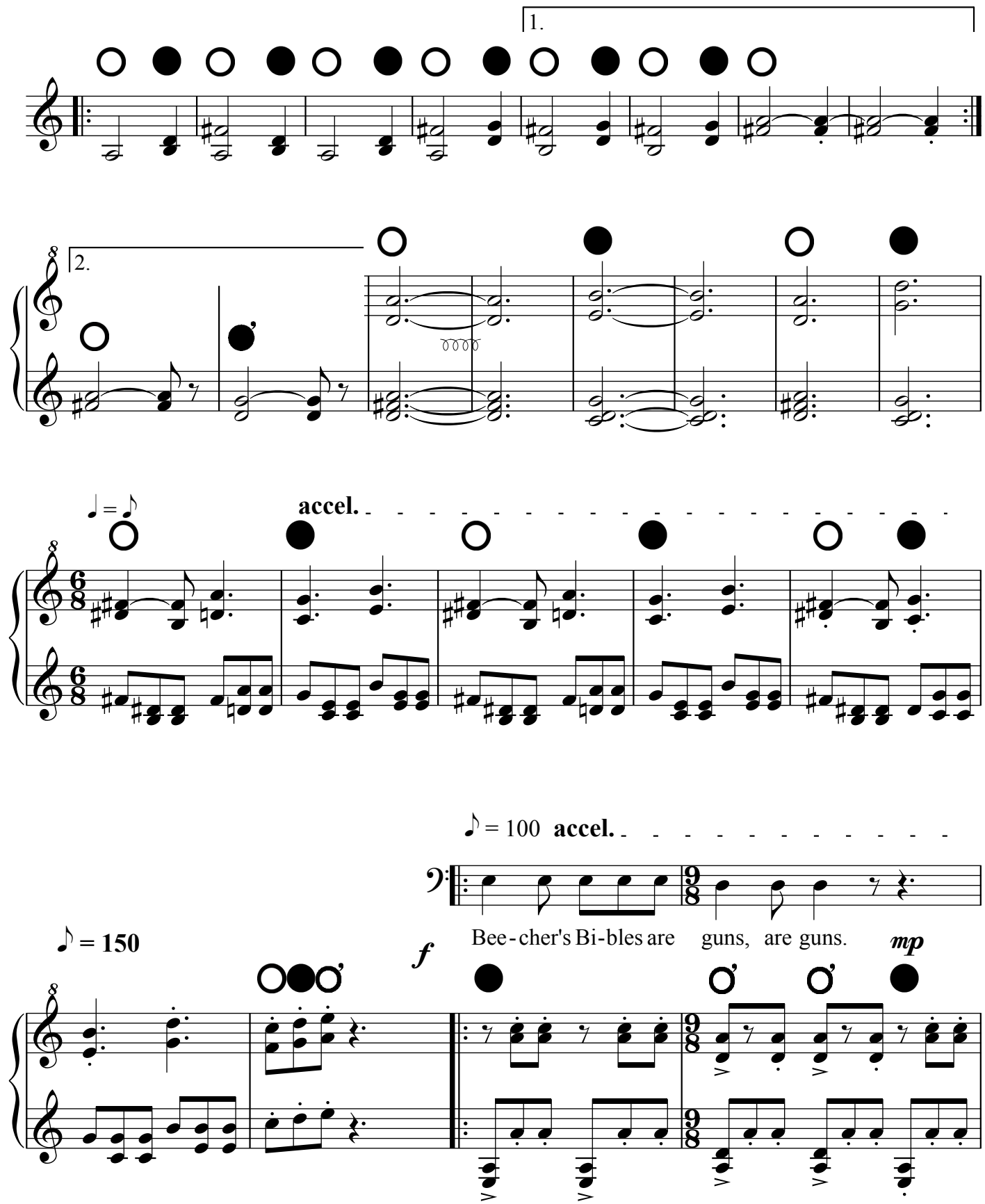

♪ = 130
♪ = 180

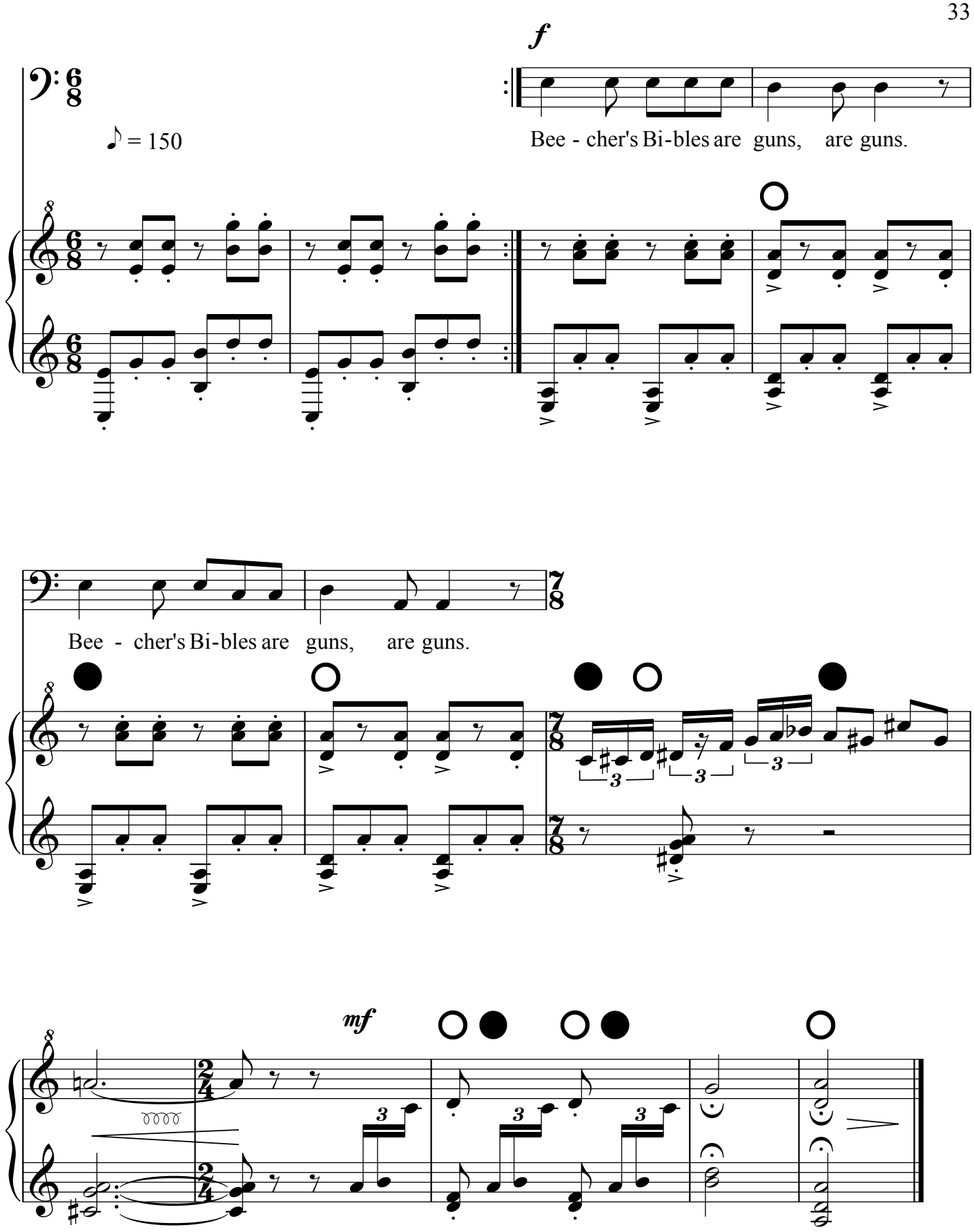

♪ = 120


accel. to ♪ = 130
♪ = 130
♪ = 180

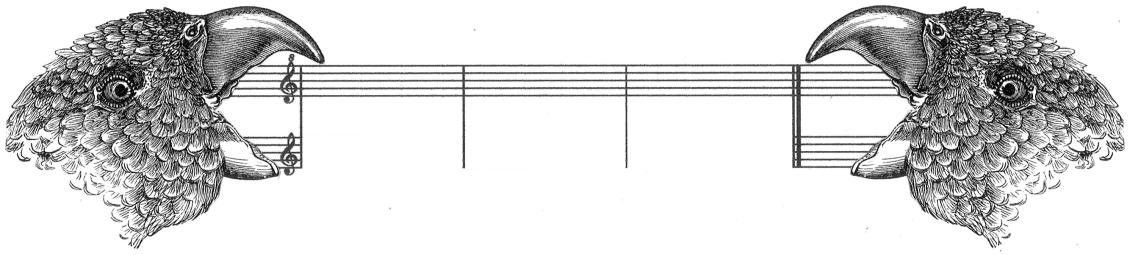

♪ = 120
Bee - cher's Bi-bles are
guns, are guns. Bee - cher's Bi-bles are guns, are guns.


♩ = 90
1. When will our
2. When will our
1.
2.
tears run to- ge - ther with our me - mo - ries?
tears run to- ge - ther with our e - ne - mies' tears?

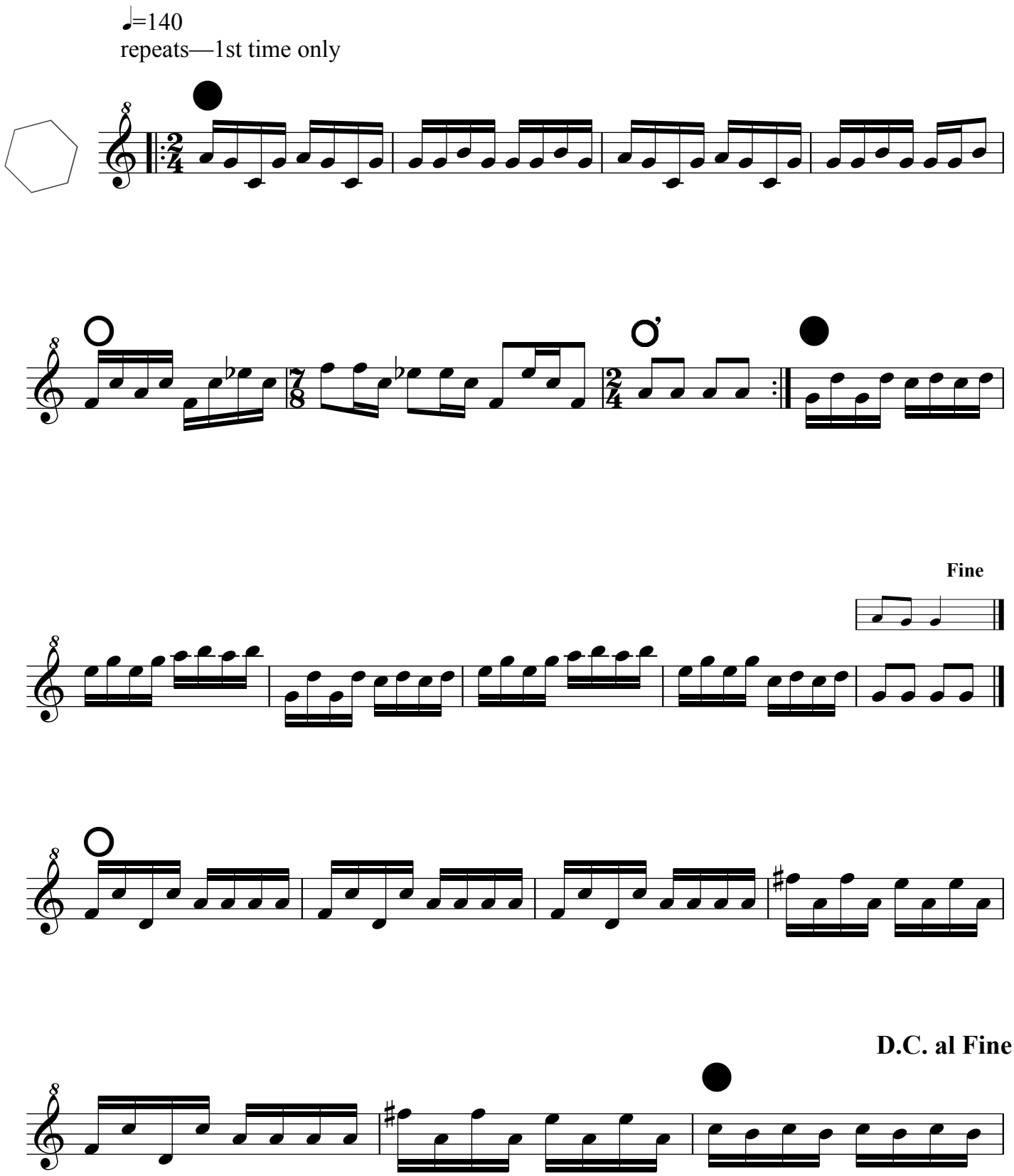

1.
2.
accel.
♪ = 100 accel.
Bee - cher's Bi - bles are guns, are guns.
♪ = 150
f
mp


f
♪ = 150
Bee - cher's Bi-bles are guns, are guns.
Bee - cher's Bi-bles are guns, are guns.
mf

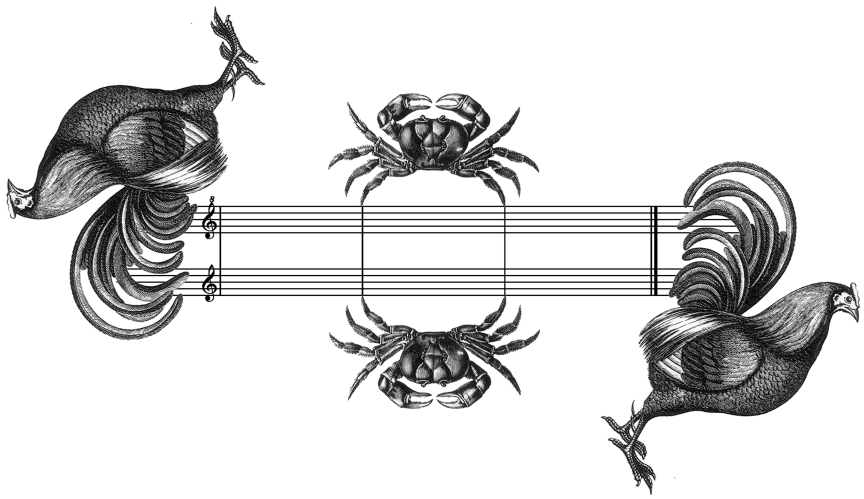
Twenty-Five-Yard Dash



This tune involves an extended technique on the concertina. It's played on only the right side of the instrument, while the left side is lodged between the feet of the player. This requires an awkward posture, but allows for the use of both hands on the right side. Generally speaking, I play it as fast as I can, so whatever your fastest is, play it that fast (the metronome marking provided is typical for me). The repeated G in measures two and four, and the repeated A in measures fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, and eighteen, are accomplished by alternating between the two buttons that can be used for those notes. When playing through the D.C. al fine, play the ossia bar for the final measure.

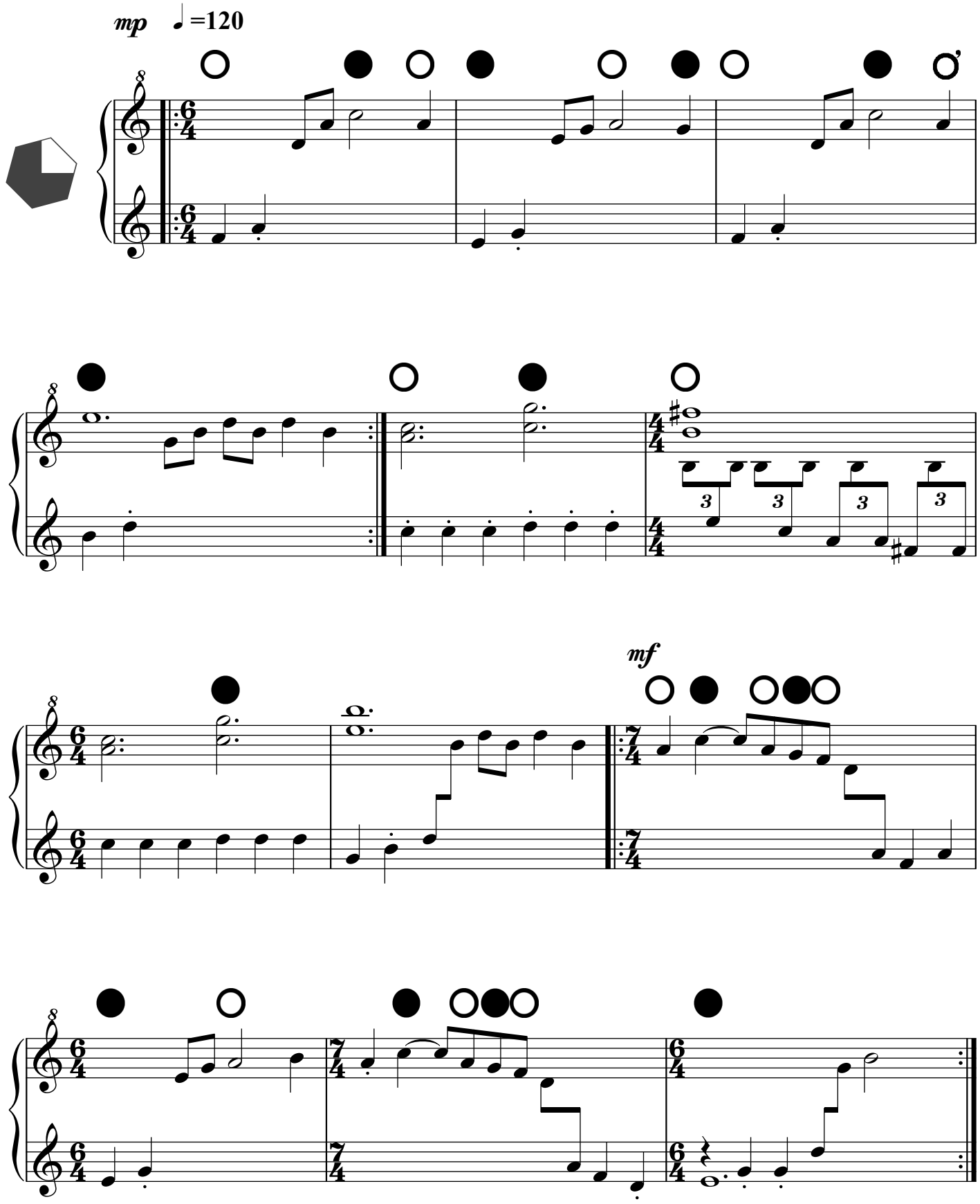

♩=140
repeats—1st time only
Fine
D.C. al Fine

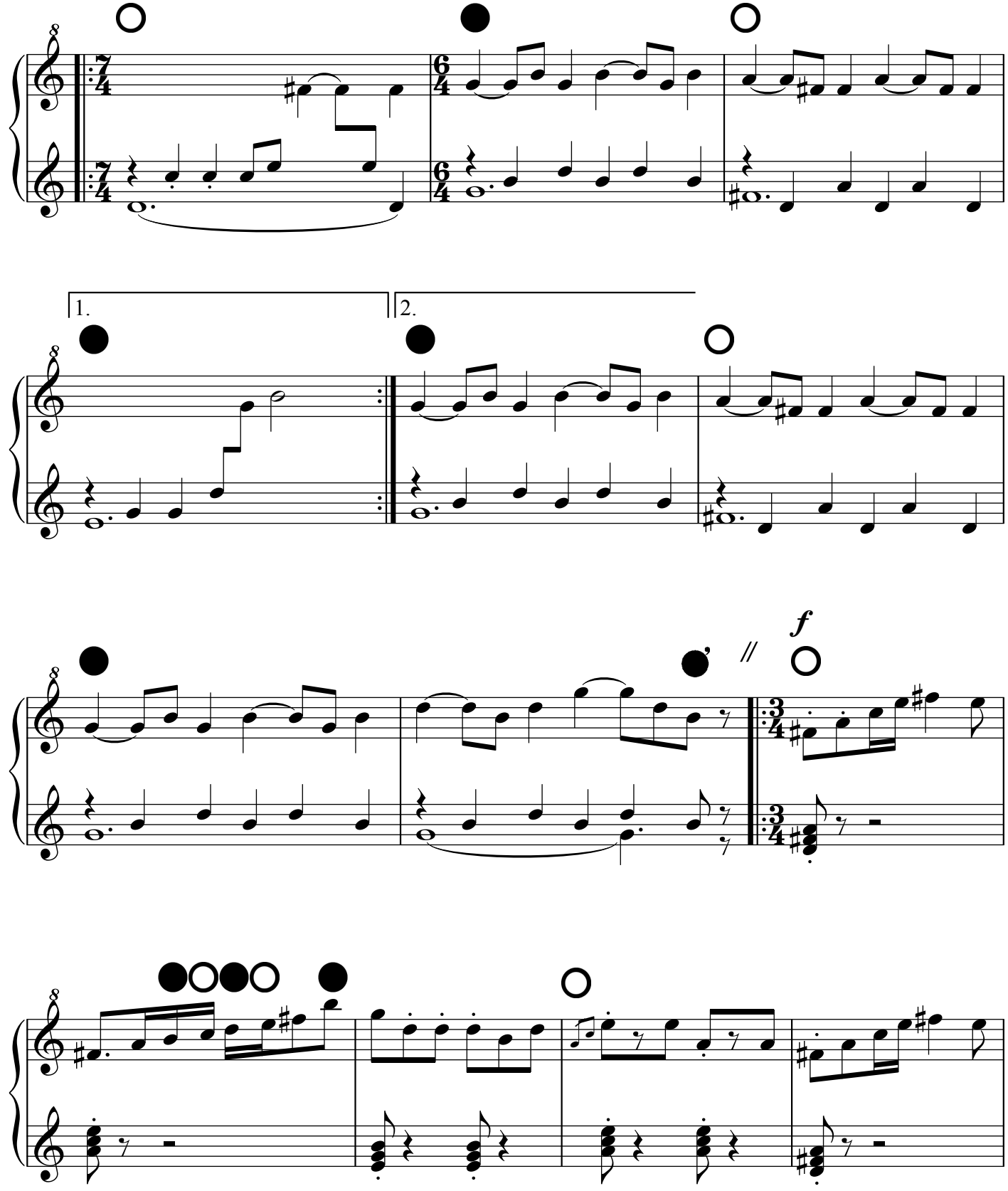
My Favorite Constellation

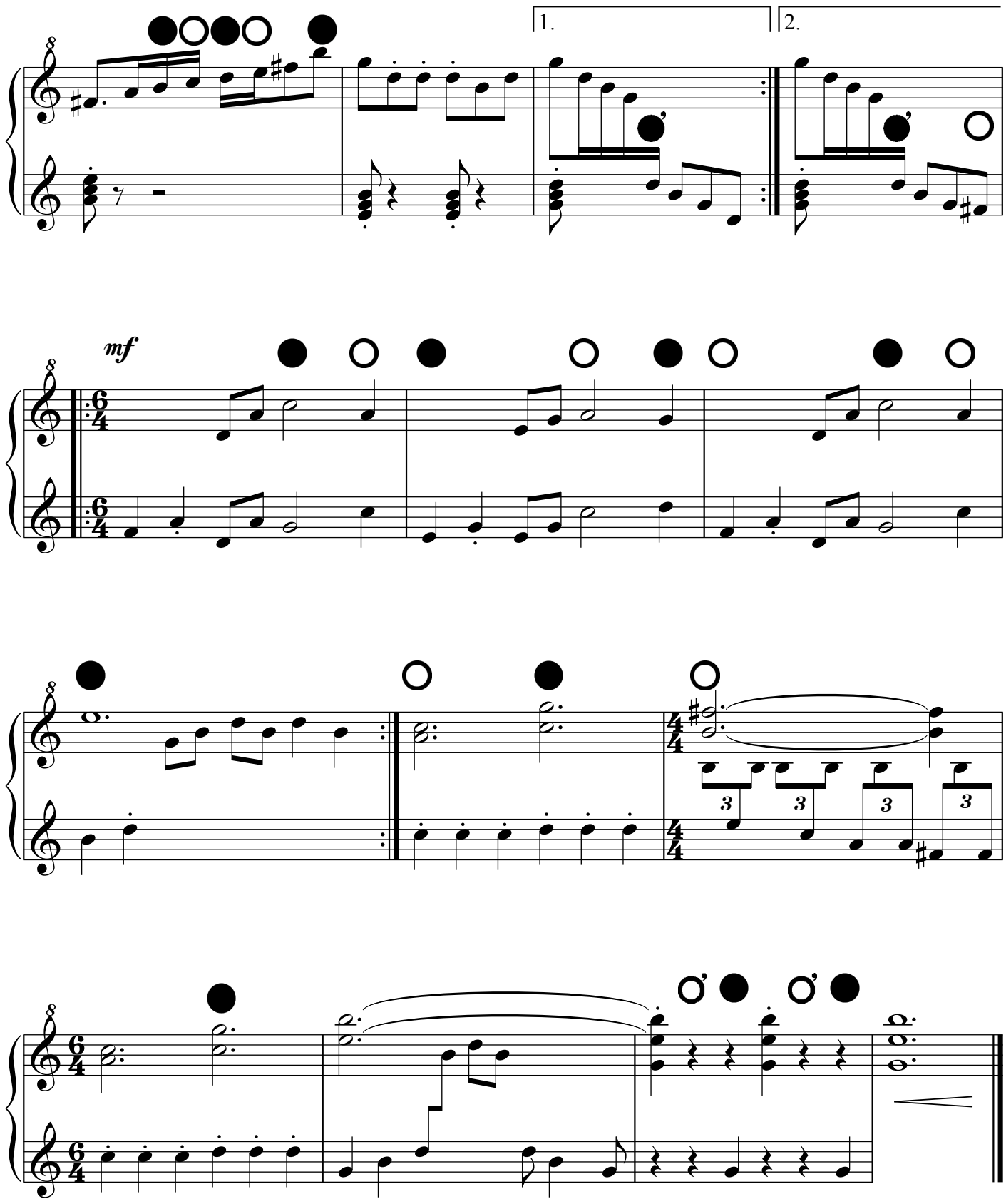


This was one of the final tunes I wrote on my plastic twenty-button concertina. It was a frustrating tune because I couldn't play the fast part as nicely as I wanted—such experiences, as they became more common, inspired me to move up to a better instrument. I still recommend inexpensive concertinas as starter instruments—they're a good way to gauge the depth of your interest, though I cringe as the thought of adding more plastic to the world, and occasionally imagine my own old plastic squeezebox joining the plastic continent slowly accreting in the North Pacific gyre.

All of that said, there are some concertinas out there that are so poorly made as to be unplayable—expect to pay, in 2007 U.S. dollars, about $250.


mp
♩=120
mf

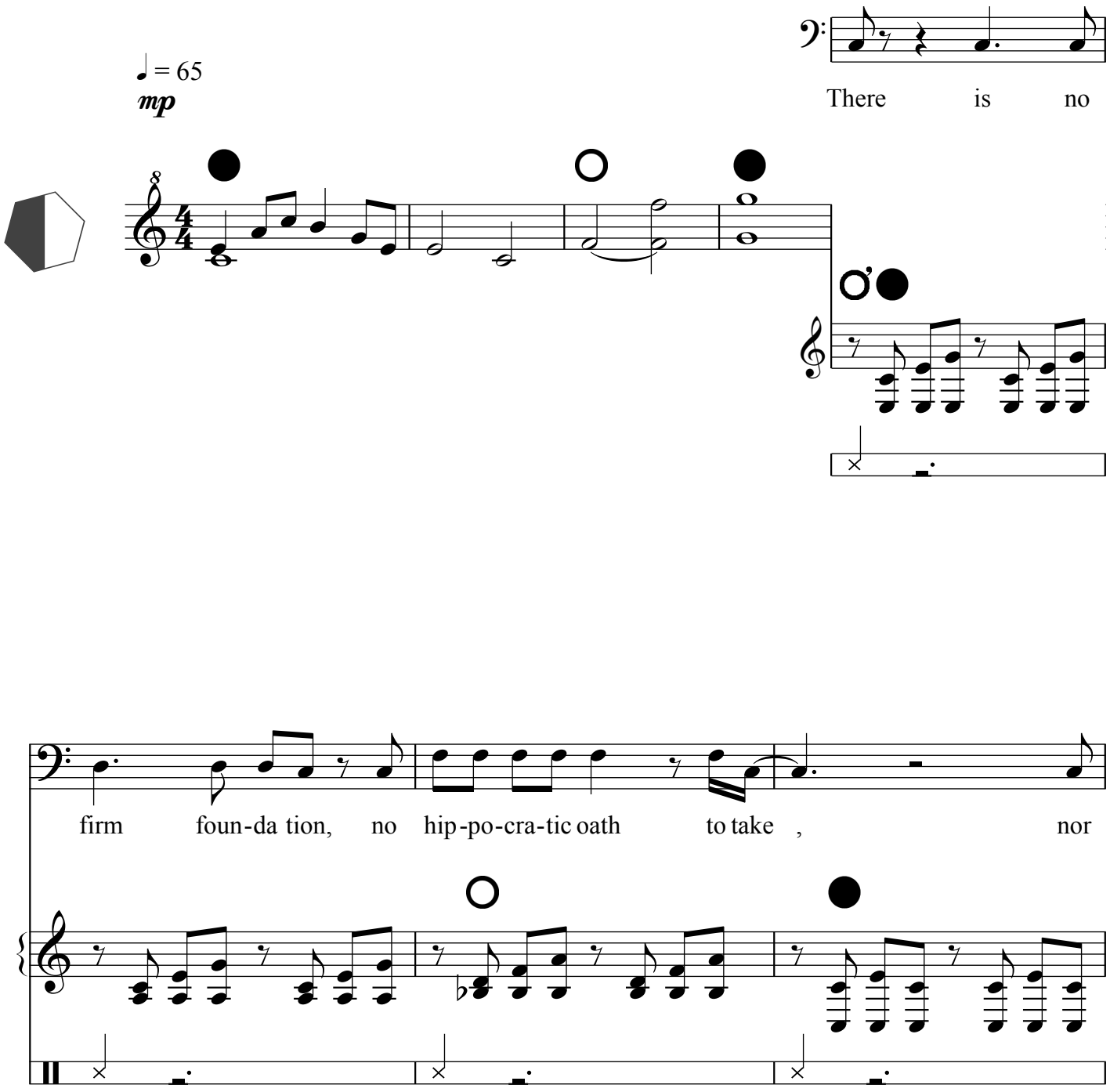

1.
2.
f

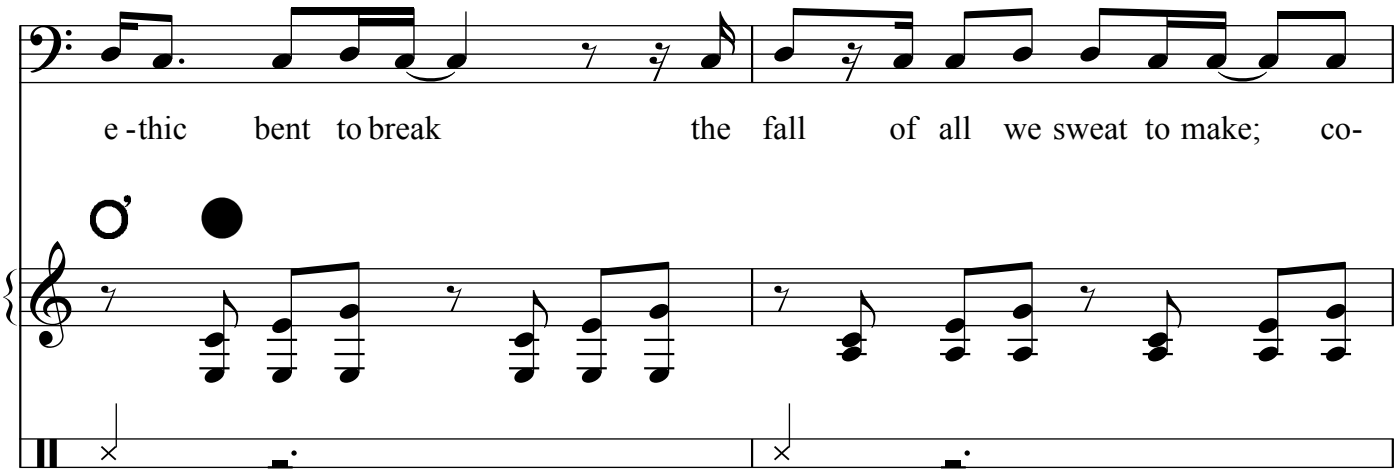

1.
2.
mf

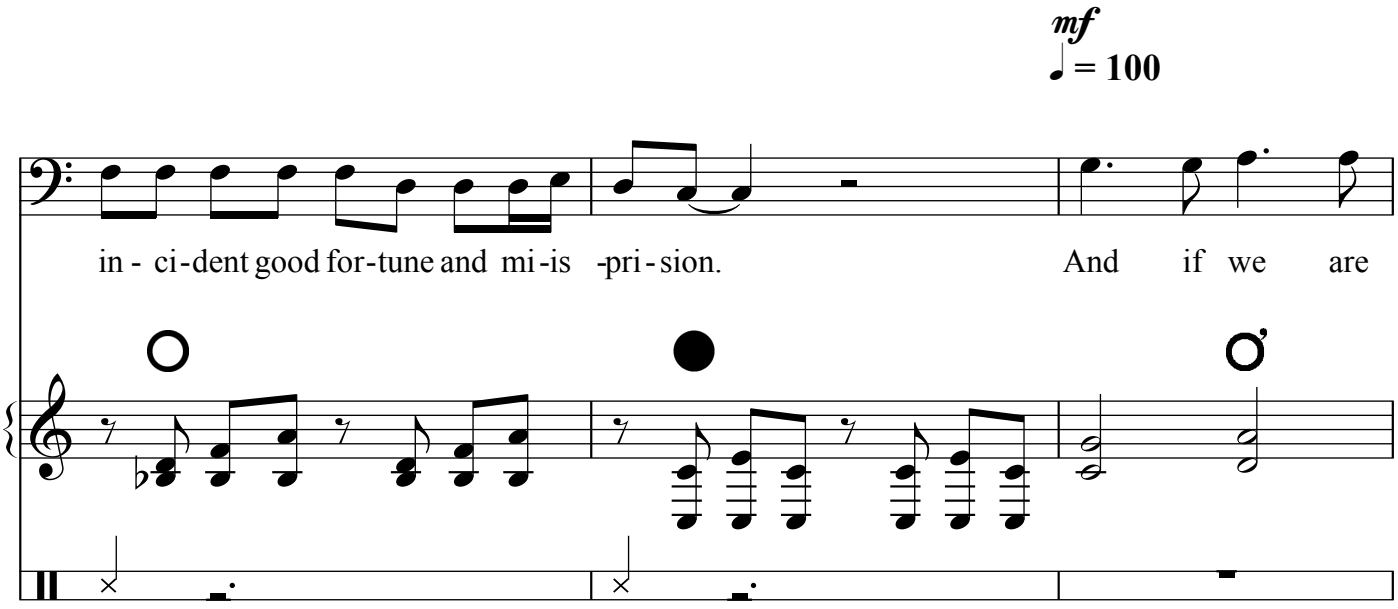
Let Us Build There

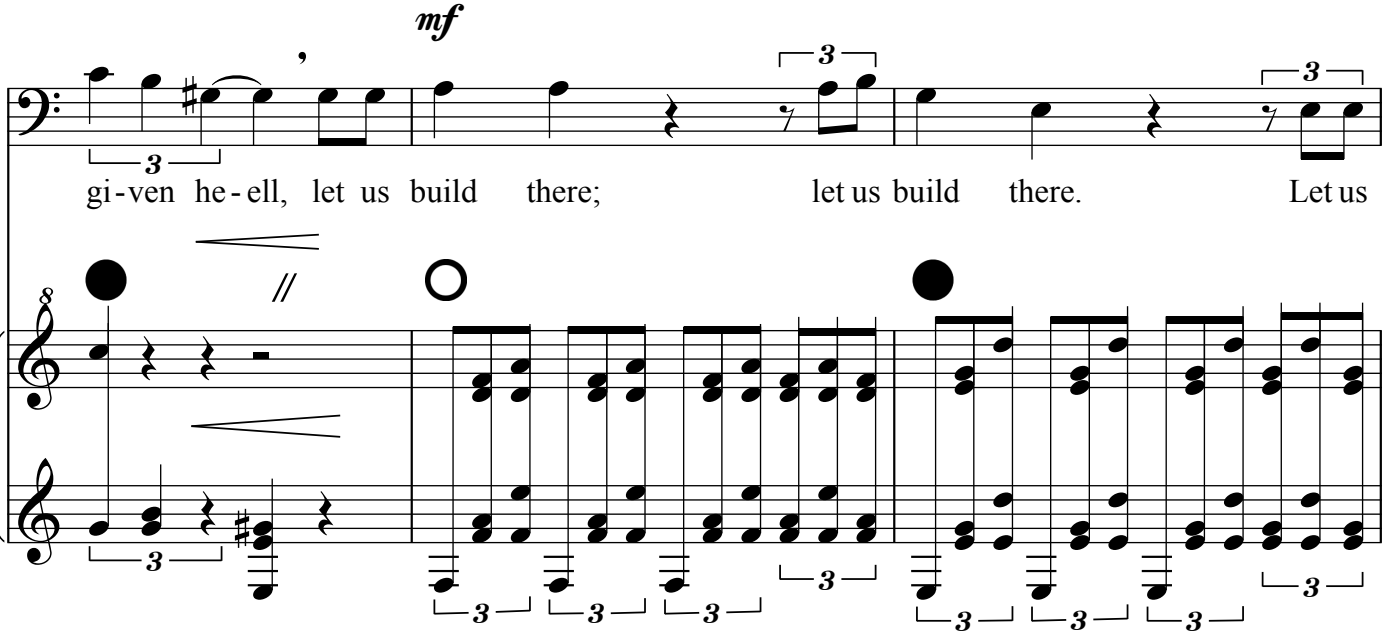
This is the one song in the collection that features foot stomping—I've notated this very simple part with the percussion system under the grand staff on the first two pages.

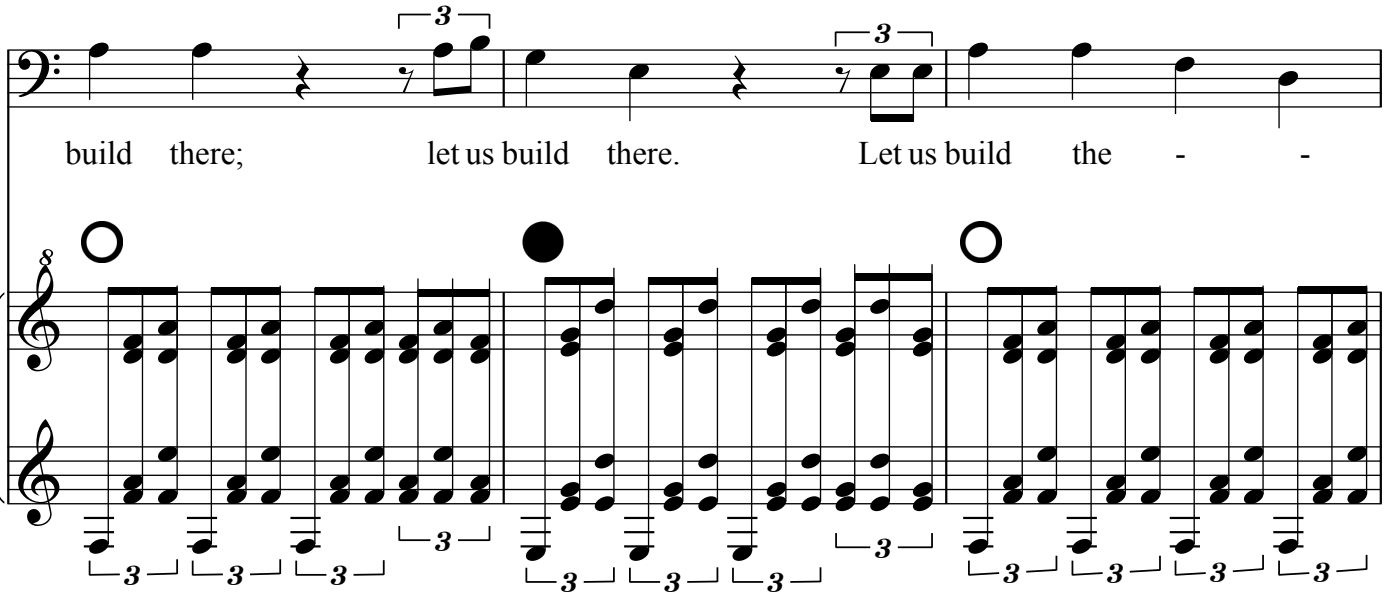
This song is dedicated to a Seattle building once called "the Belmont," which was demolished in May, 2008. Some friends who lived there were evicted, the latest evictions in a string spanning many years as Seattle razes functional old housing stock to make a quick buck in the condo market. If buildings are part of the social fabric, shouldn't developers be accountable to the public? I thought it would be nice if builders were required to take an oath similar to that of Hippocrates, to do no harm.

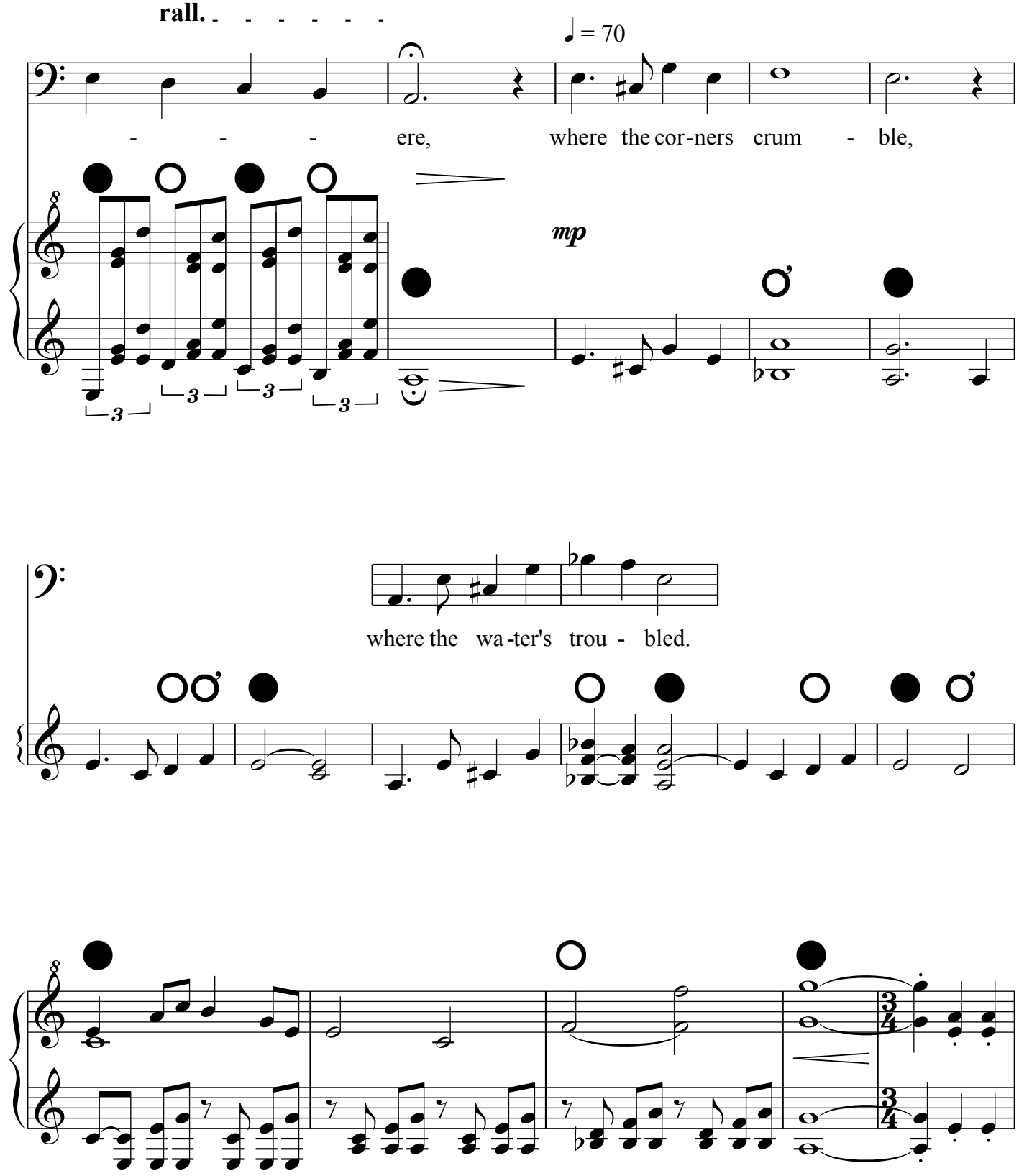

♩ = 65
mp
There is no
firm foun-da tion, no hip-po-cra-tic oath to take , nor

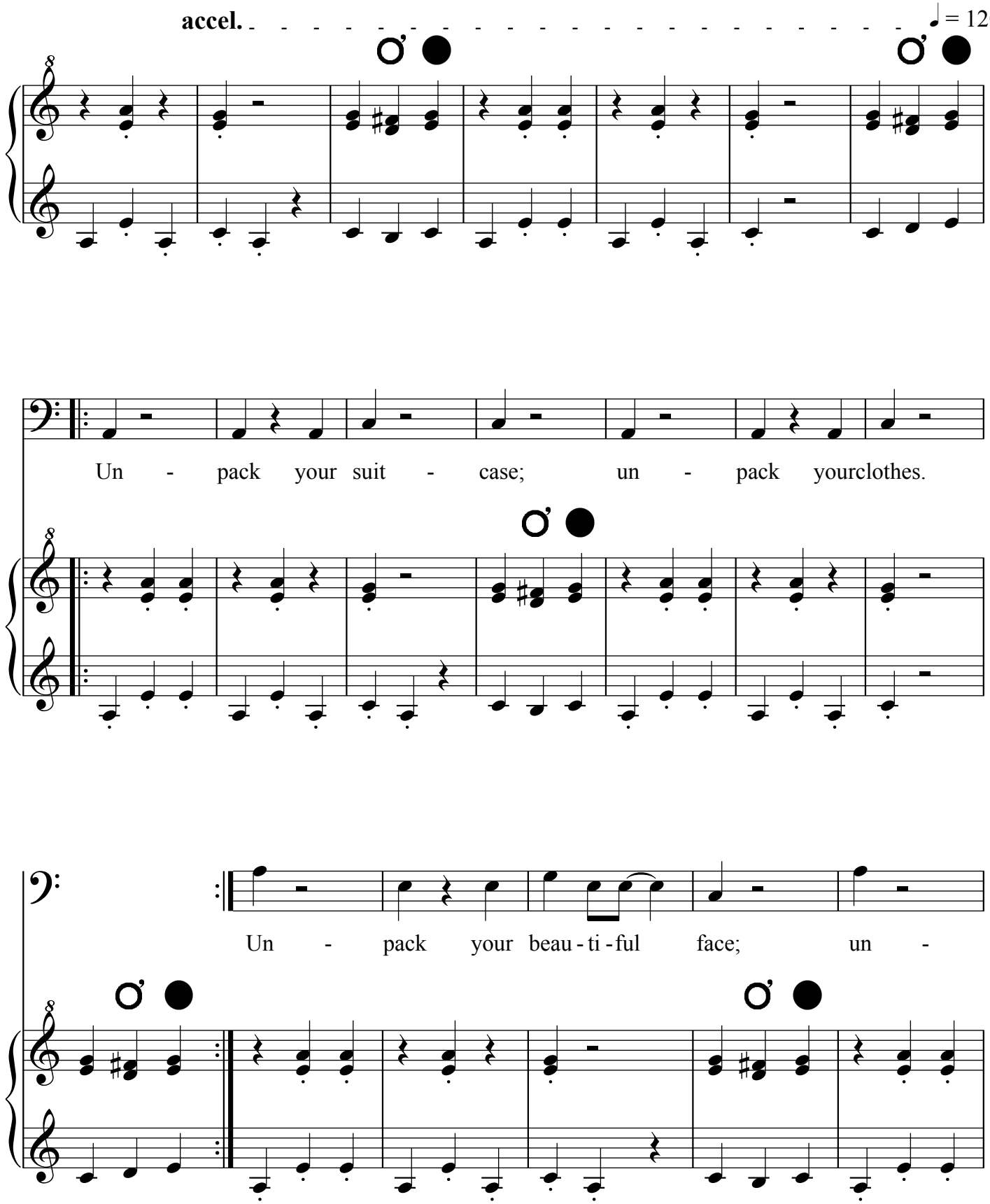

e - thic bent to break the fall of all we sweat to make; co-

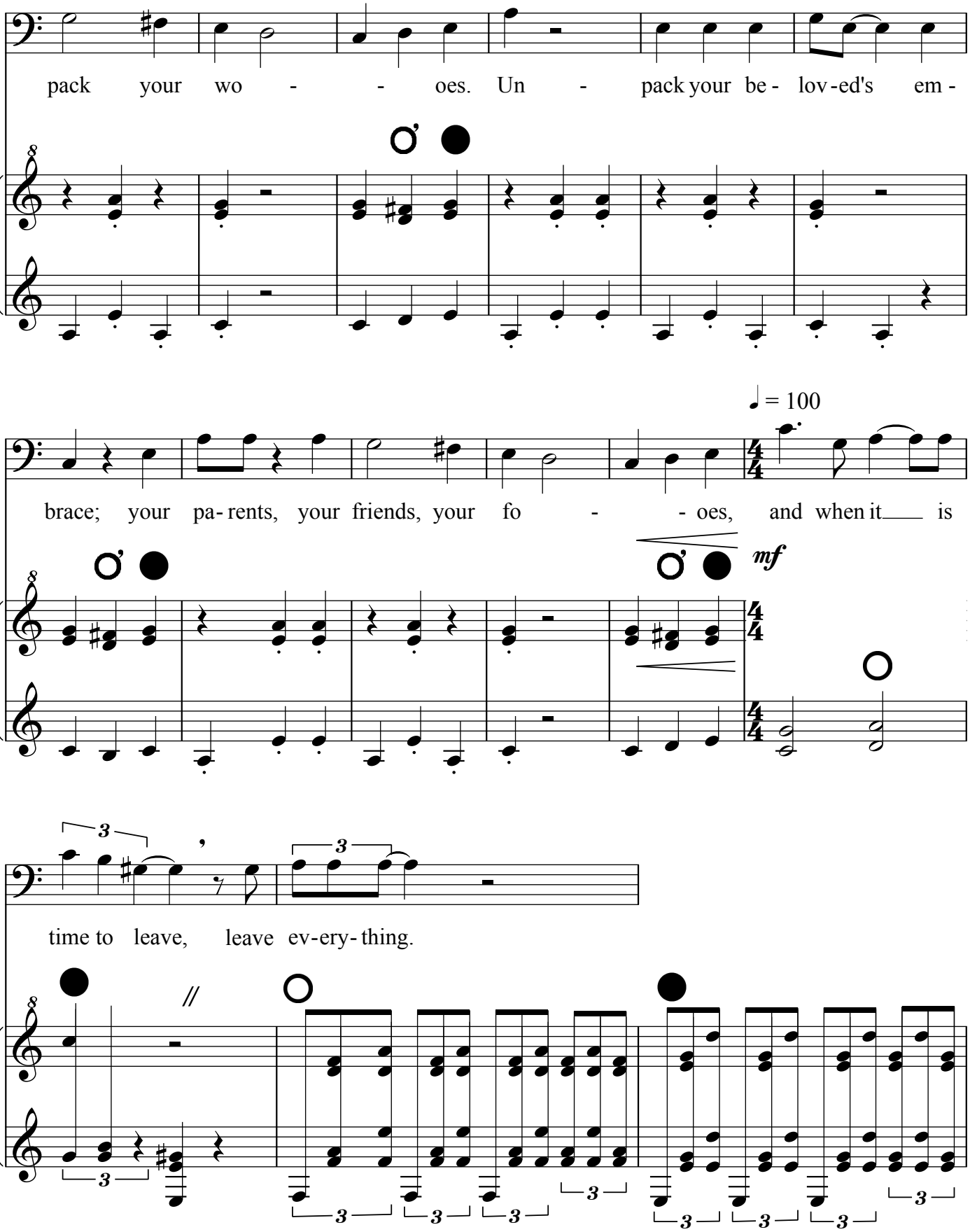

mf
= 100
in - ci - dent good for - tune and mi - is - pri - sion. And if we are

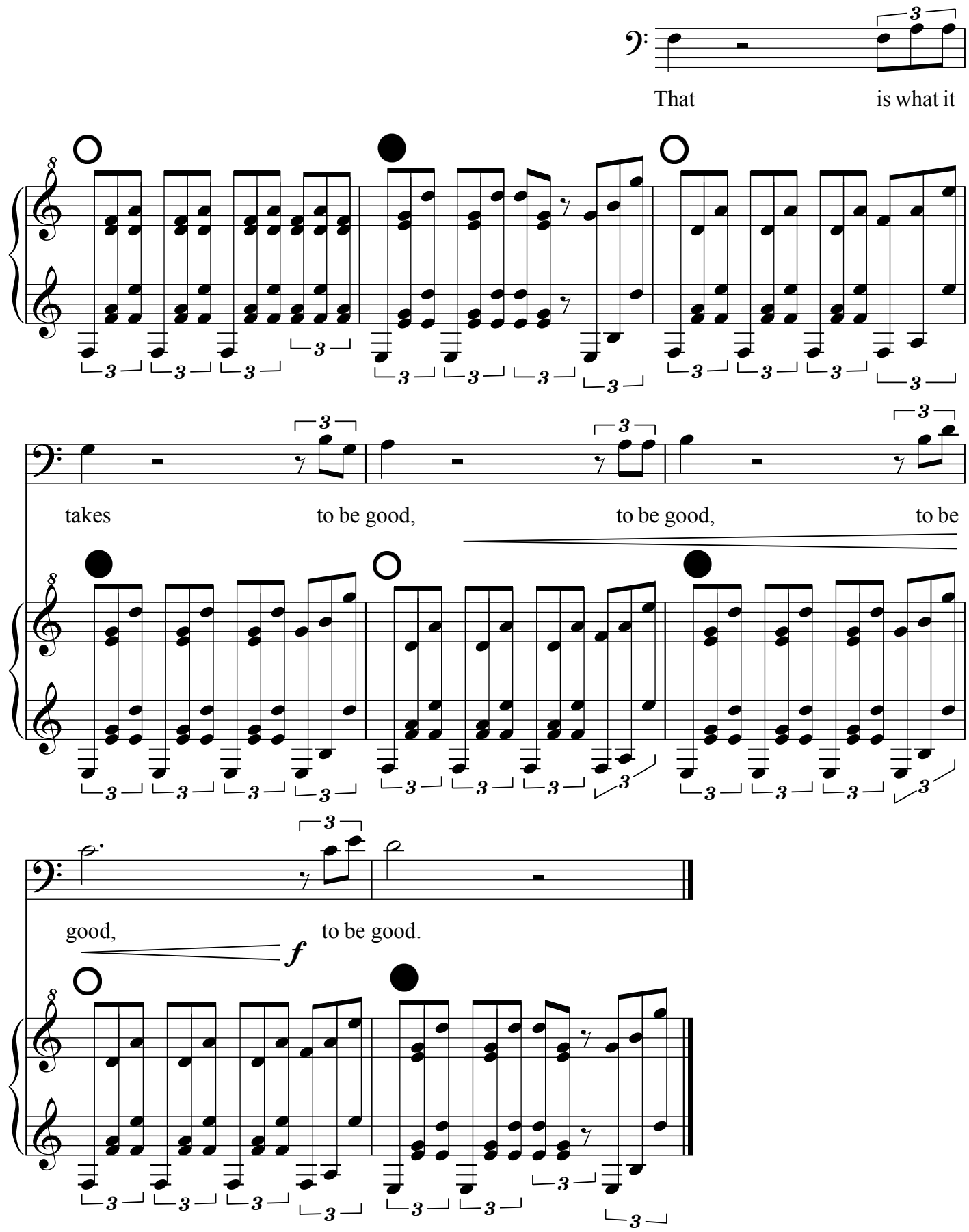

mf
gi-ven he-ell, let us build there; let us build there. Let us


build there; let us build there. Let us build the - -

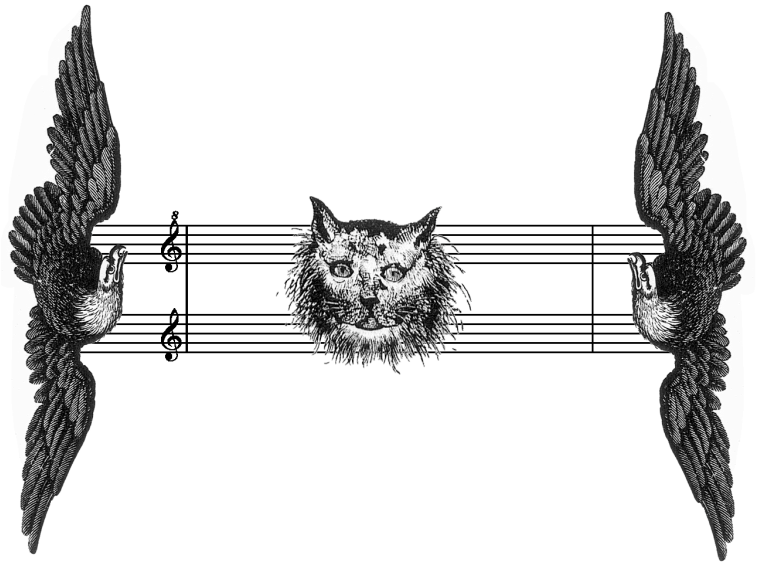

rall.
♩ = 70
- - - ere, where the cor-ners crum - ble,
mp
where the wa-ter's trou - bled.


accel.
♩ = 120
Un - pack your suit - case; un - pack yourclothes.
Un - pack your beau - ti - ful face; un -


pack your wo - - oes. Un - pack your be - lov - ed's em -
brace; your pa - rents, your friends, your fo - - oes, and when it is
♩ = 100
mf
time to leave, leave ev - ery - thing.


That
is what it
takes
to be good,
to be good,
to be
good,
to be good.
f

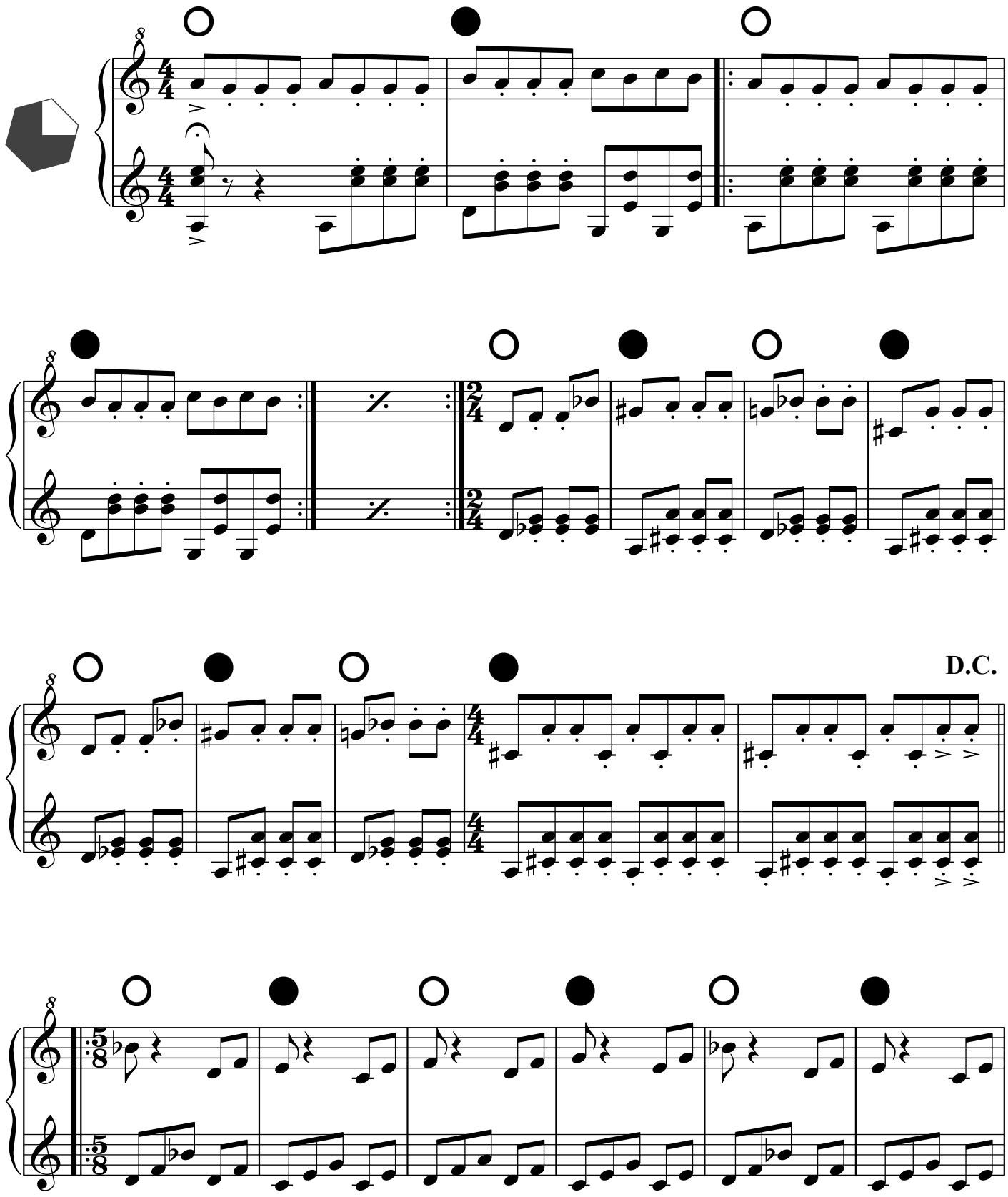
Life on the Odyssean Wave



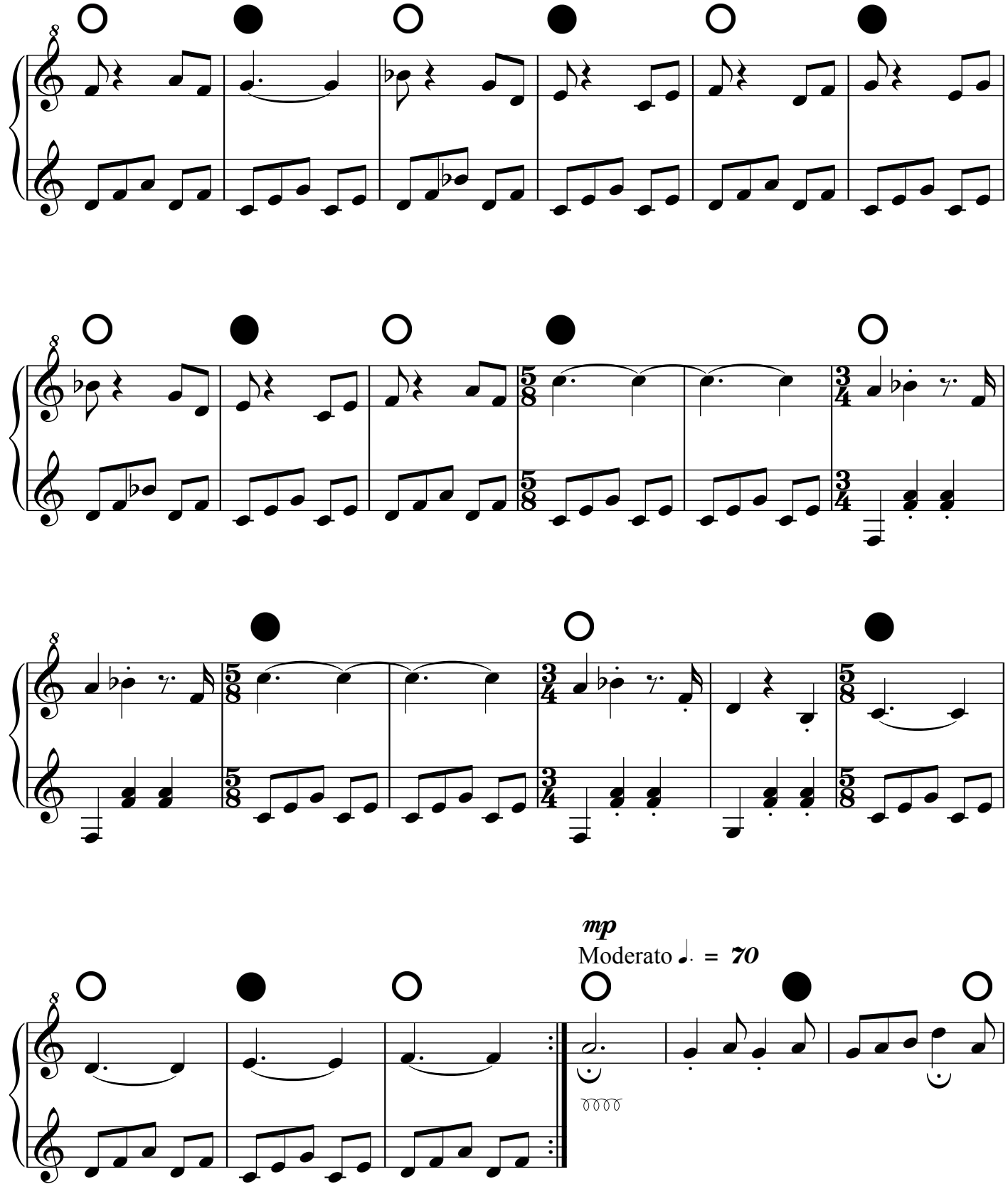
This is one of a few songs I wrote in which I tried to incorporate a variety of time signatures. The title is adapted from the title of a song I ran across in an old book of fiddle music, which was "Life on the Ocean Wave." Though I wasn't interested in the fiddle tune, I did like the title enough to use most of it.

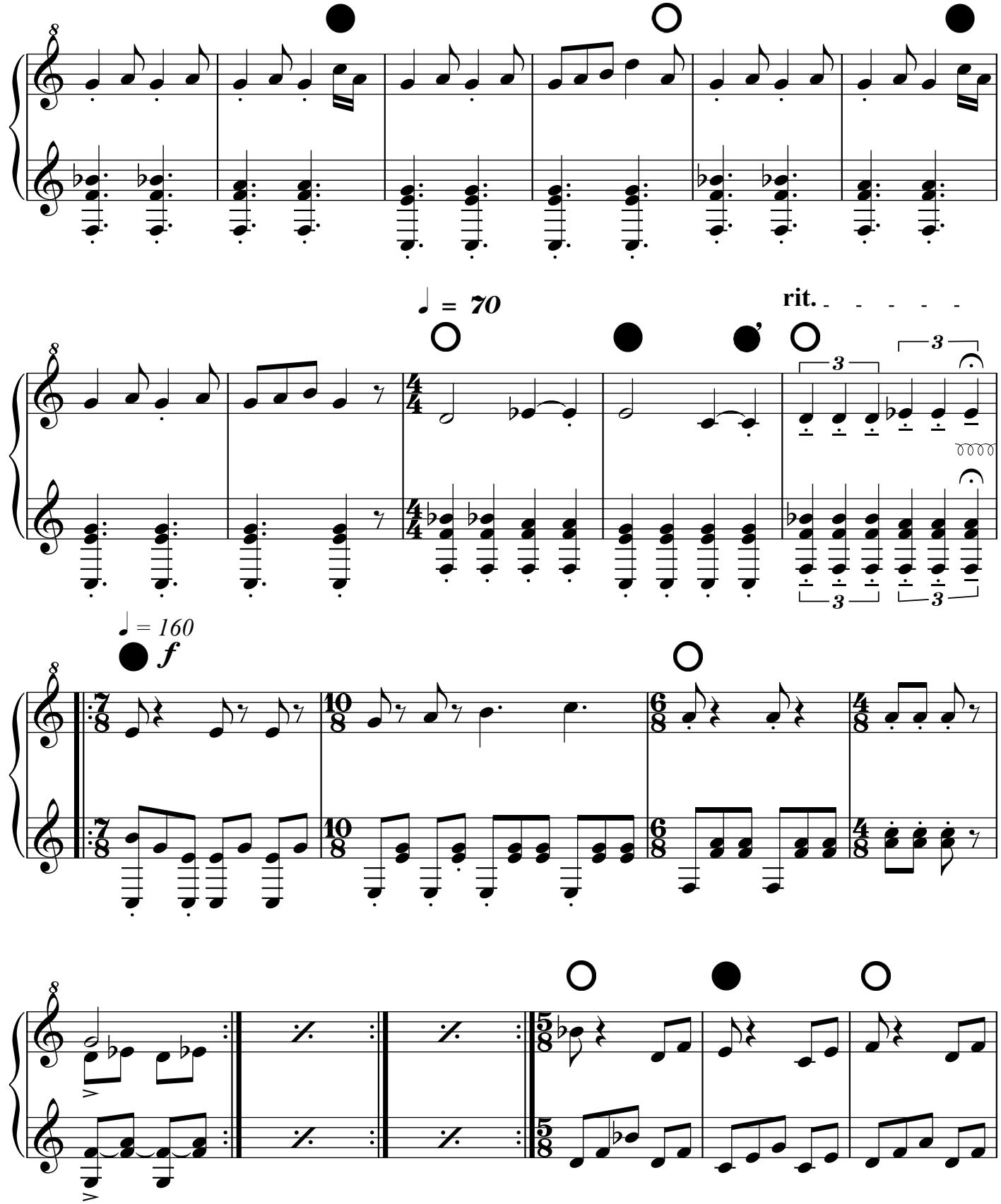
Allegro ♩ = 135

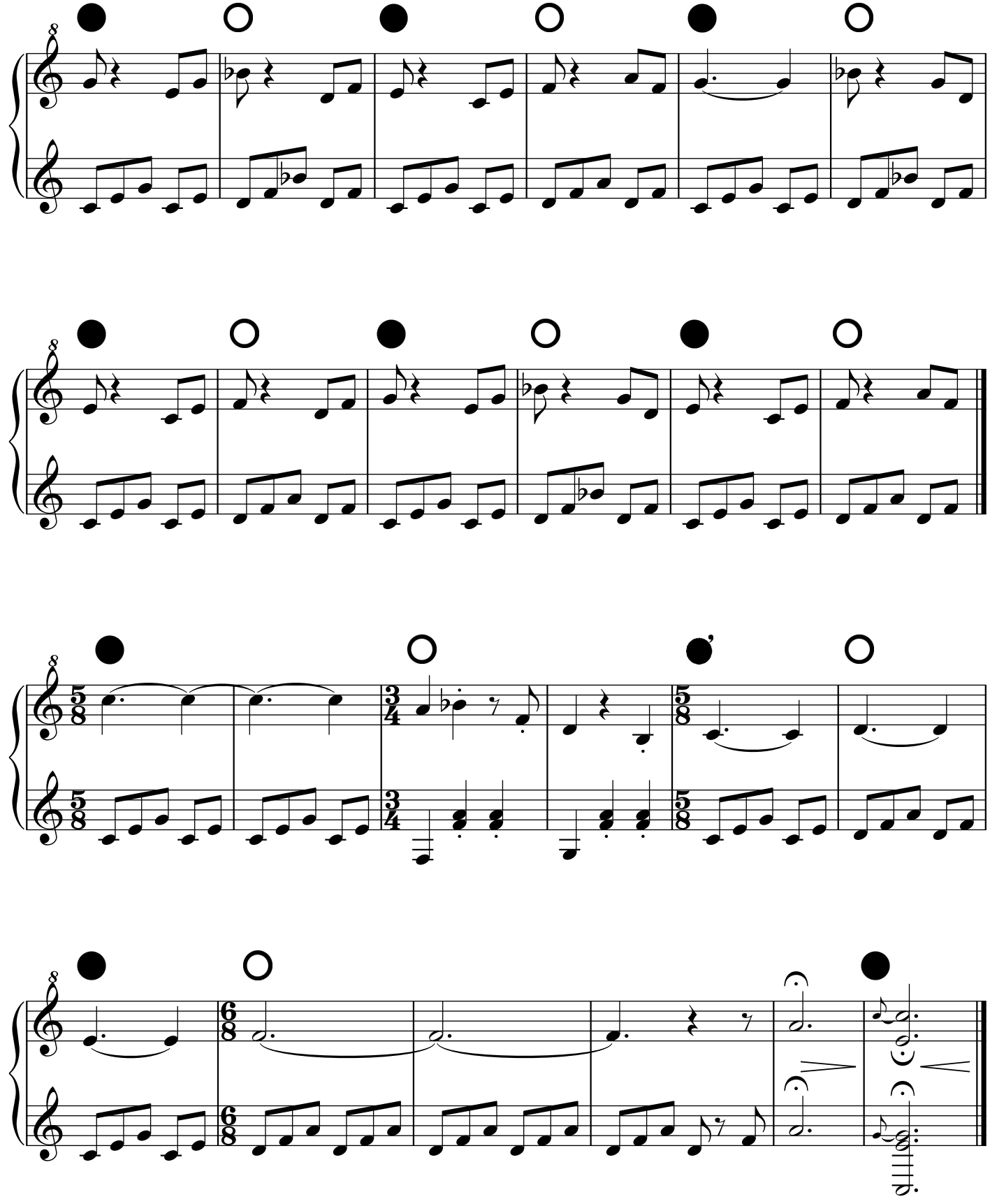
mf



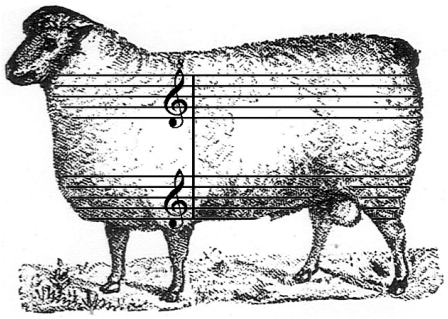
D.C.


mp
Moderato ♩. = 70

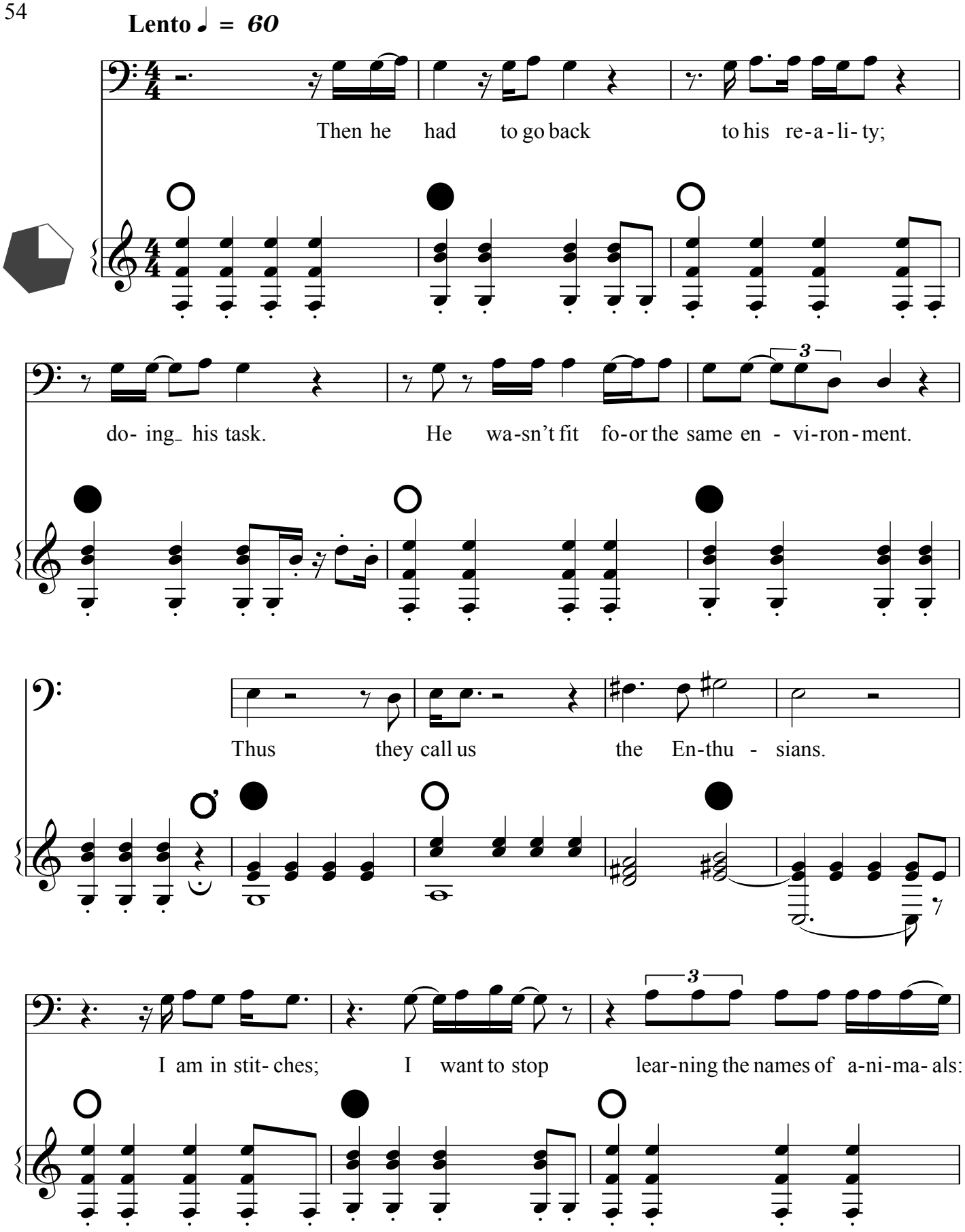

♩ = 70
rit.
3
3
3
3
♩ = 160
f

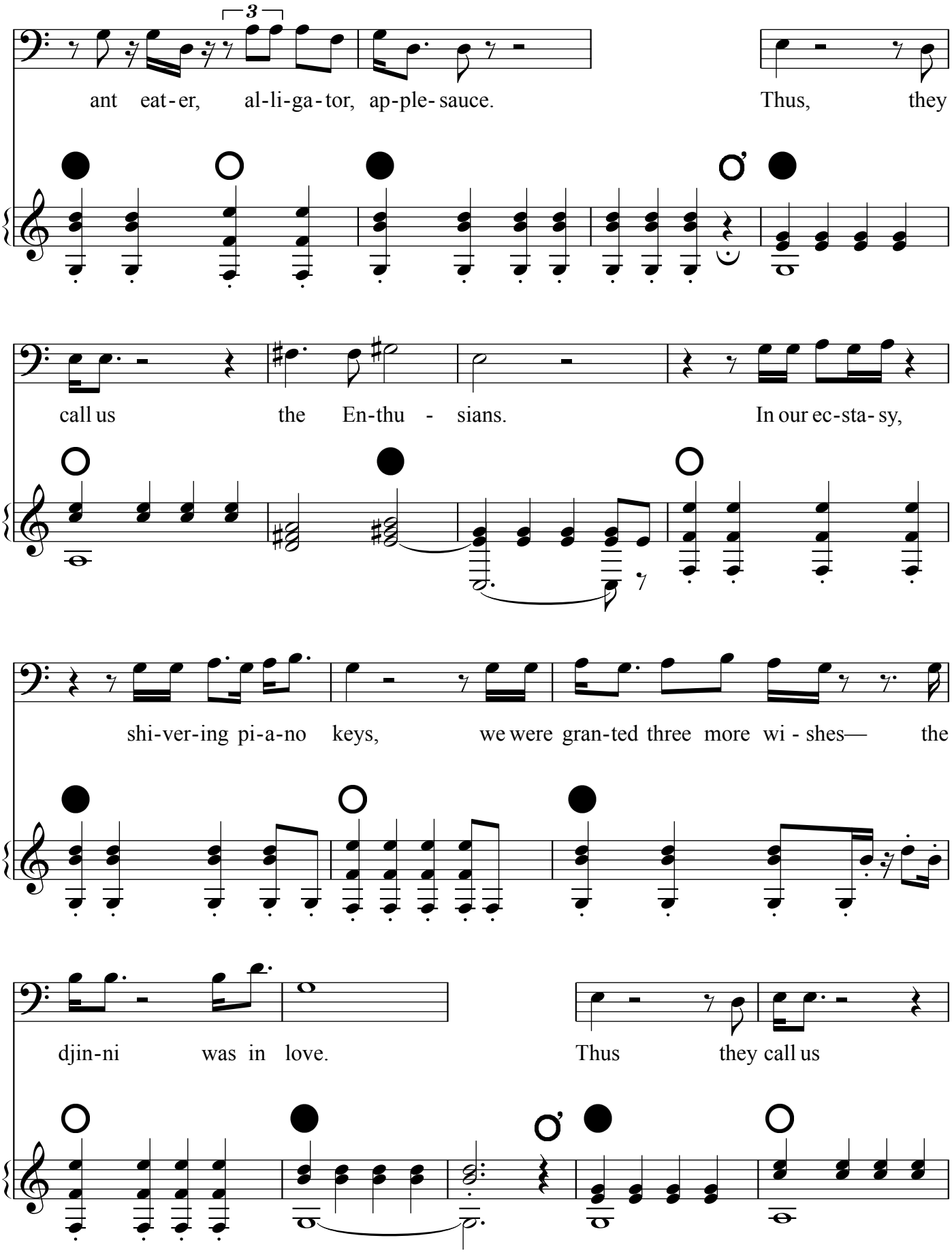


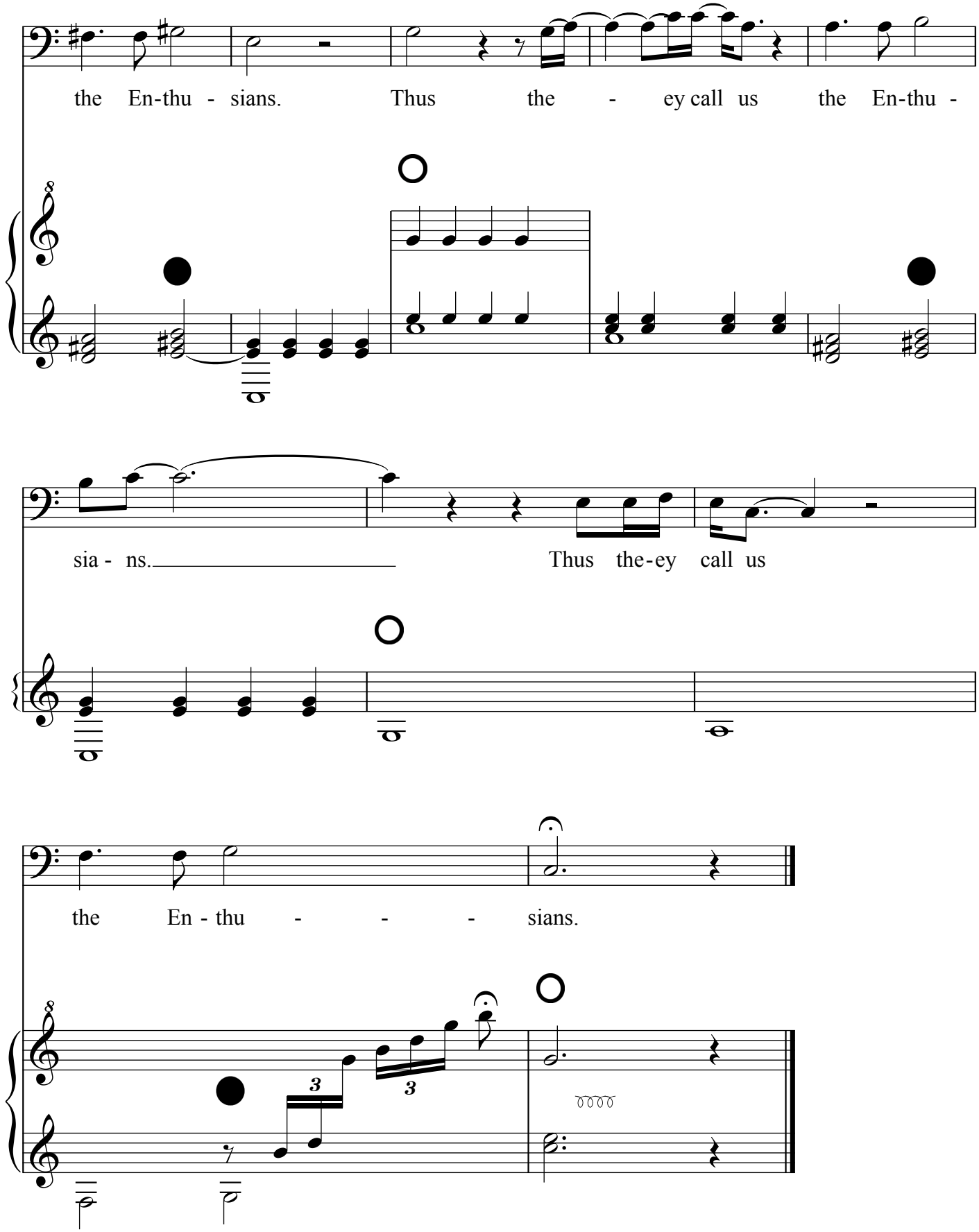
The Enthusians



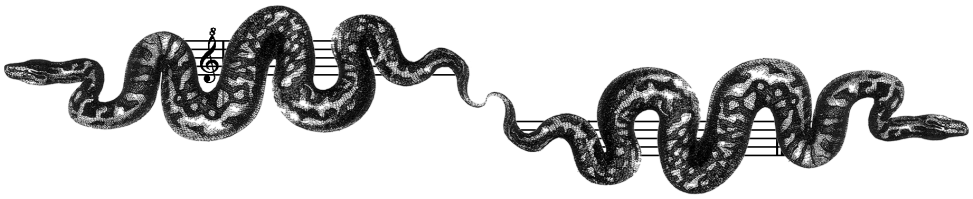
This is an older song, which I originally composed on the piano and then adapted for the concertina. I don't think the lyrics fit this album very well, but I've always liked the tune. I read some time ago that the Enthusians were ancient Greek devotees of the gods who would fall into ecstatic trances. Looking now, I can't find any references to this anywhere, and I'm not sure where I learned it.


Lento ♩ = 60
Then he had to go back to his re-a-li-ty;
do- ing_ his task. He wa-sn't fit fo-or the same en - vi-ron-ment.
Thus they call us the En-thu - sians.
I am in stit- ches; I want to stop lear-ning the names of a-ni-ma- als:


3
ant eat-er, al-li-ga-tor, ap-ple-sauce. Thus, they
call us the En-thu - sians. In our ec-sta-sy,
shi-ver-ing pi-a-no keys, we were gran-ted three more wi - shes— the
djin-ni was in love. Thus they call us


the En-thu - sians. Thus the - ey call us the En-thu -
sia - ns. Thus the-ey call us
the En - thu - - - sians.

The Song that Contains King Ludd's Theme

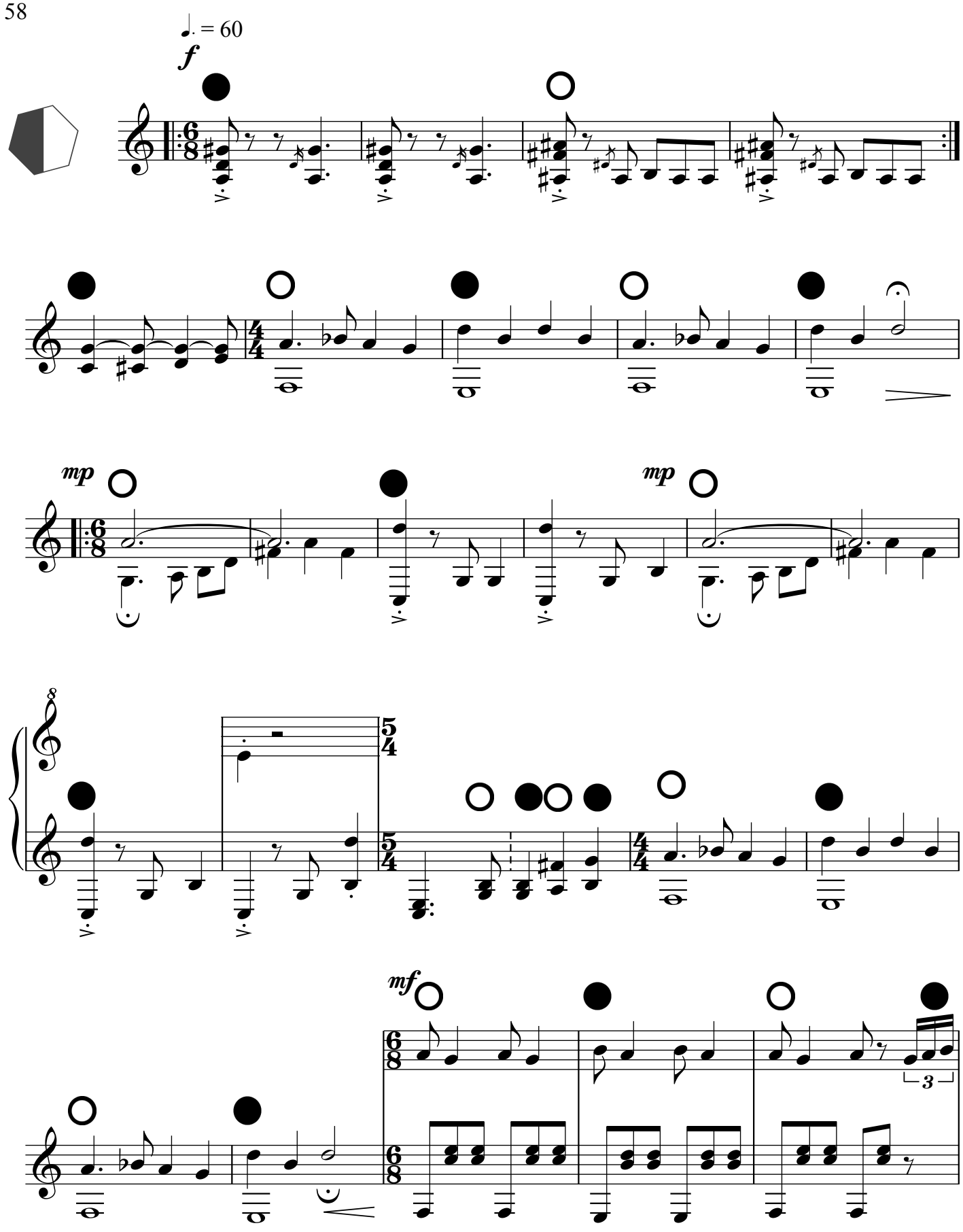


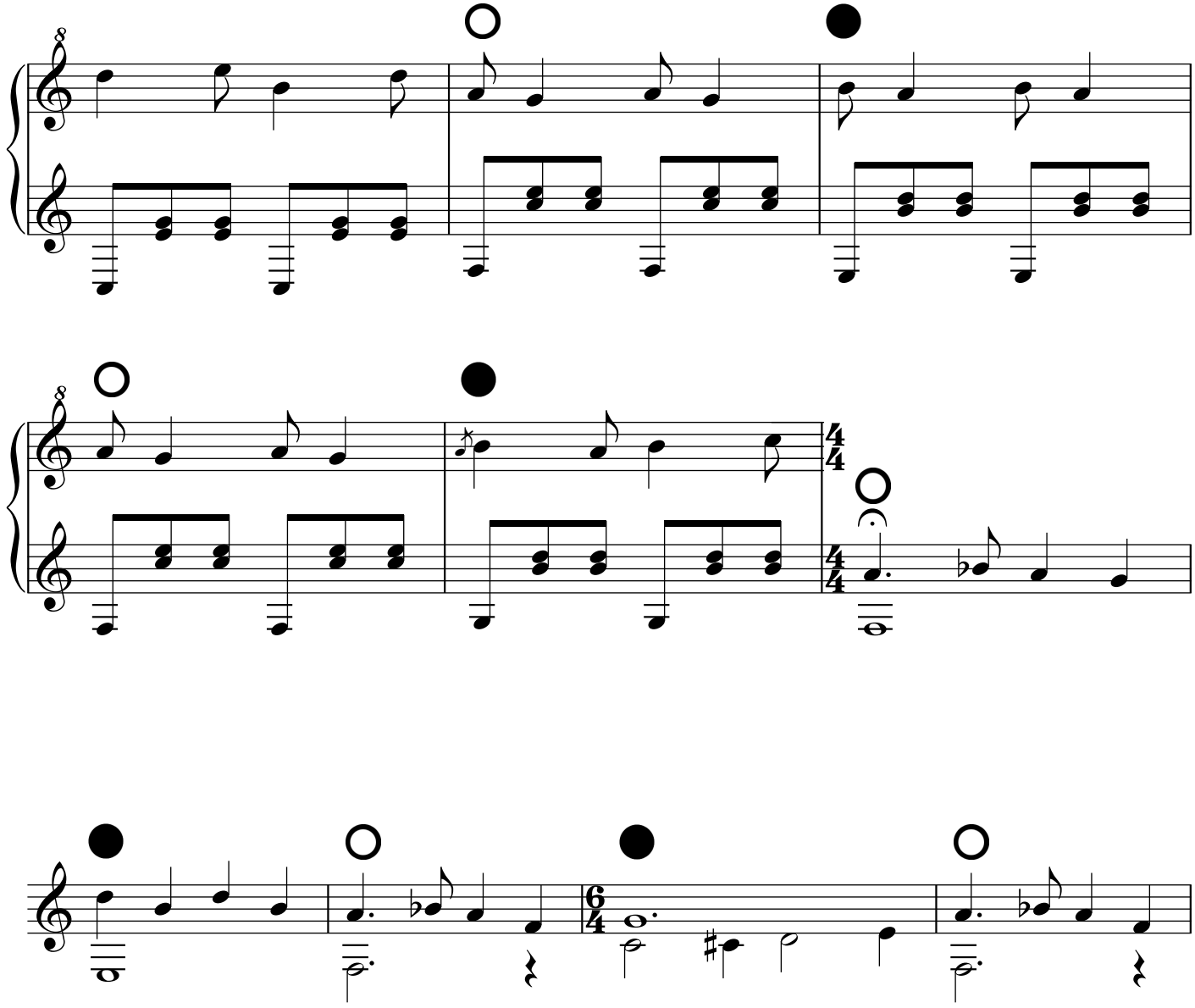
I've marked the two occurrences of King Ludd's theme with an image of a crown. The directive "accel. from very slow" should be engaged with exuberance—I typically elongate the first chord enough that it sounds to be the end of the piece.

Also known as Ned Ludd or General Ludd, King Ludd was the largely-mythic leader of the Luddites, who were an affiliation of dispossessed British stockingmakers in the early 1800s. The introduction of wide-framed looms had resulted in increased industrialization of the trade, driving out many skilled workers. (The Luddites, however, were not so much against the improvements of technology as they were against the disrespect shown toward traditional pricing practices—though they destroyed many factory looms, they focused on those factories whose owners lowered their prices.)

The threat appeared so serious to British authorities that industrial sabotage was made a capital crime, and some Luddites were indeed executed for breaking looms. One of the more famous supporters of the Luddites was Lord Byron, who penned the following verse in a letter to a friend:

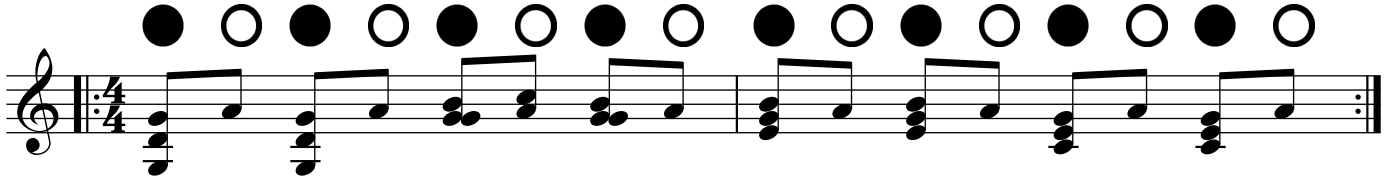
> As the Liberty lads o'er the sea
> Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with blood,
> So we, boys, we
> Will die fighting, or live free,
> And down with all kings but King Ludd!

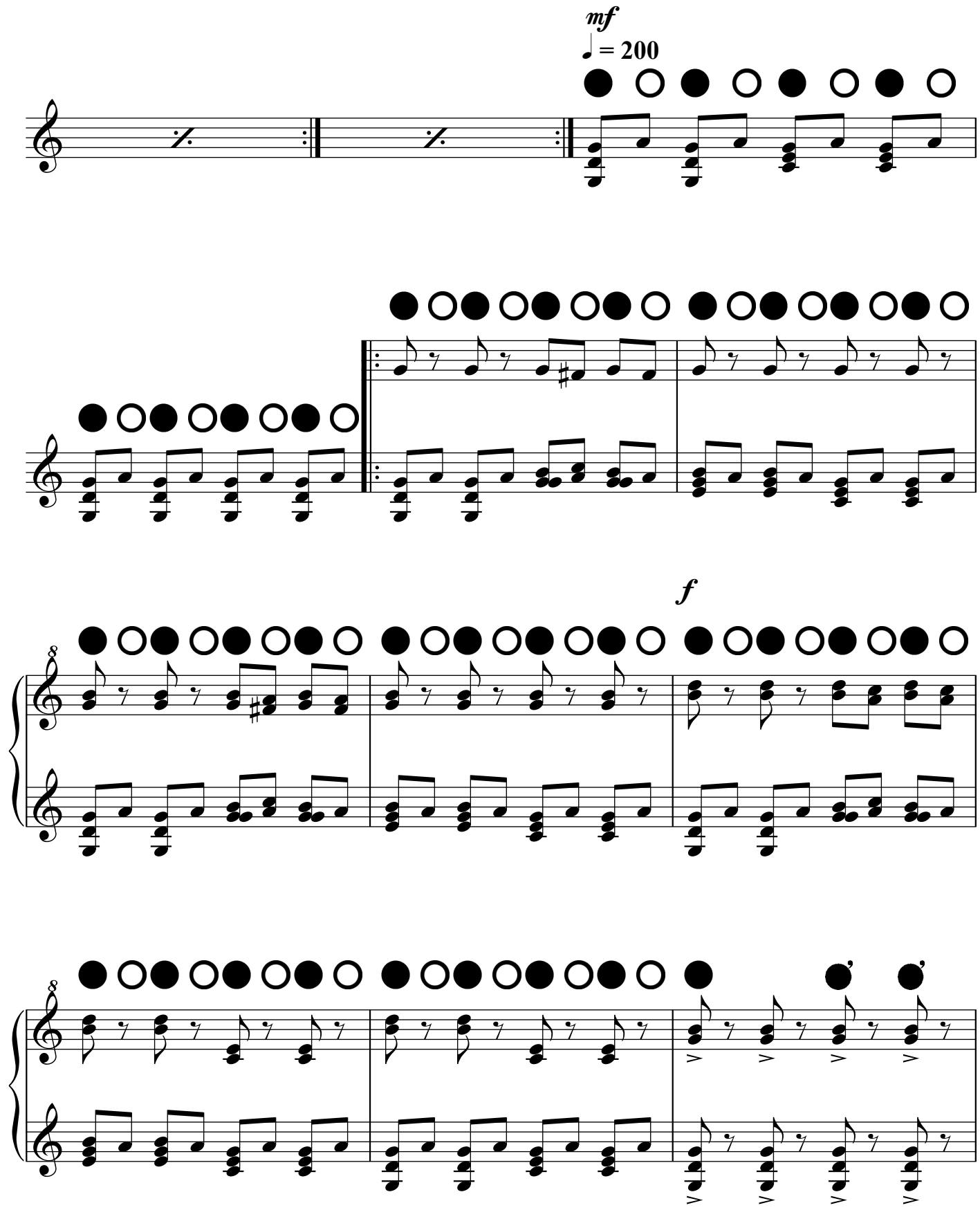

♩. = 60
f
mp
mp
8
5/4
mf
3

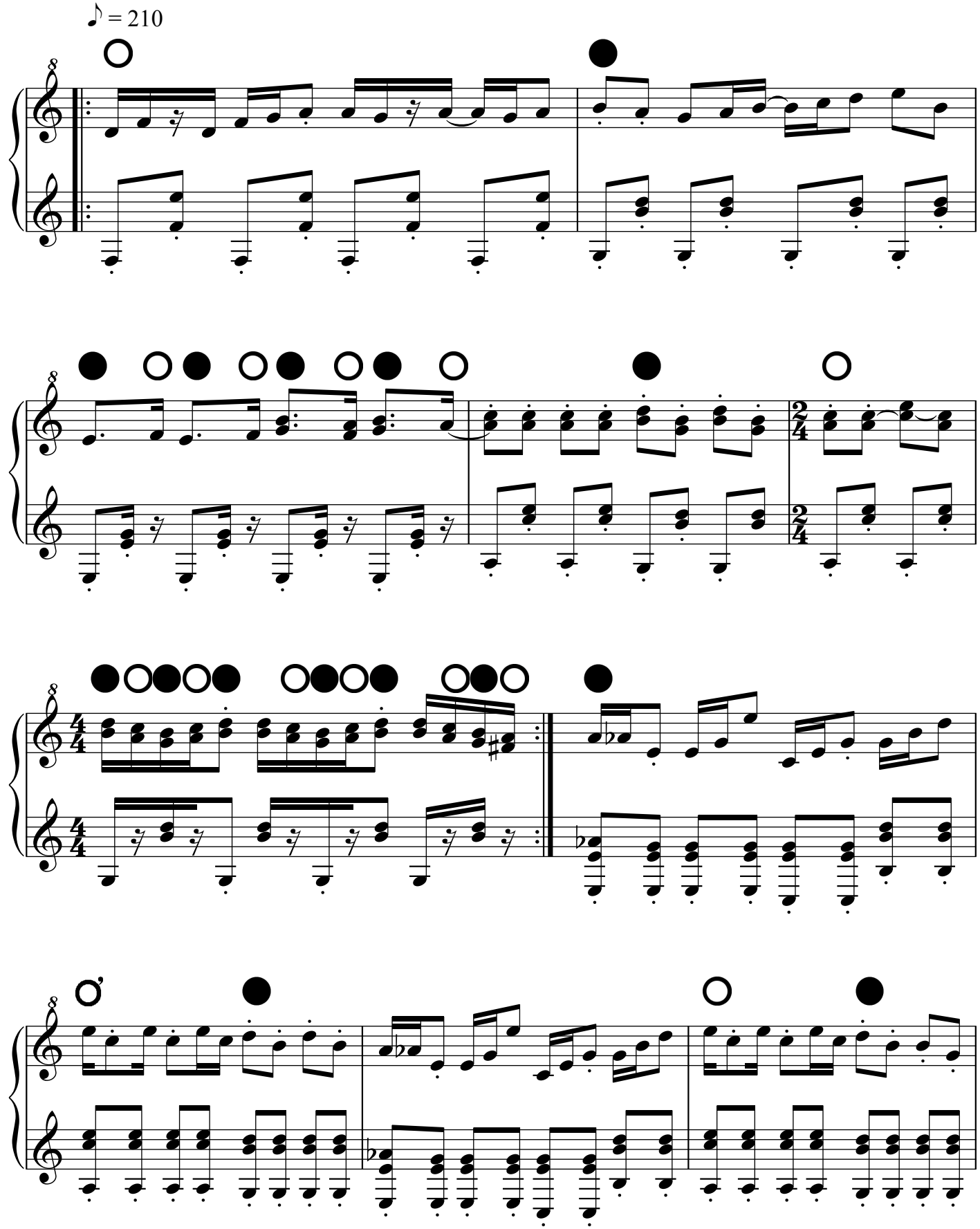


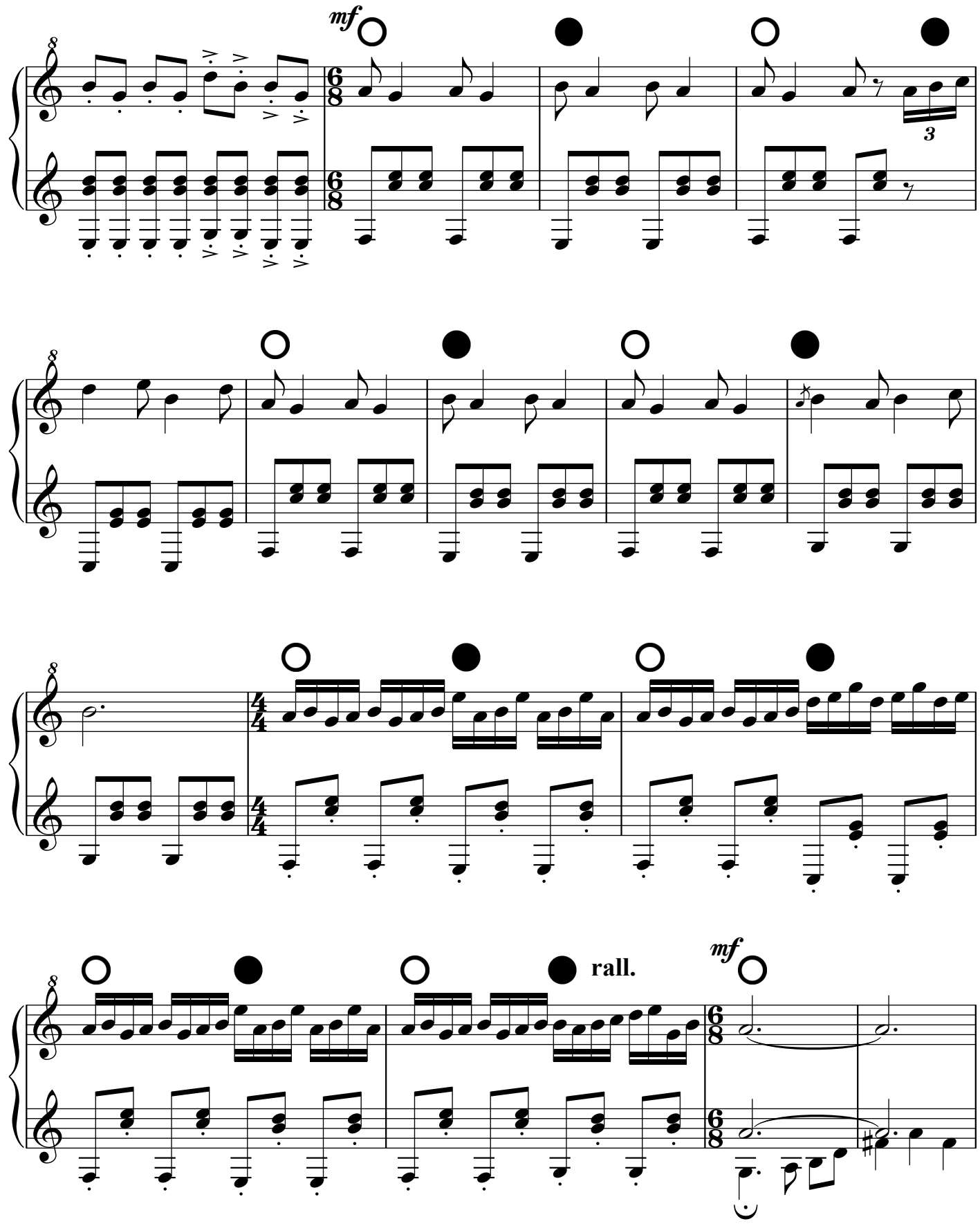
mp *poco a poco cresc. throughout*

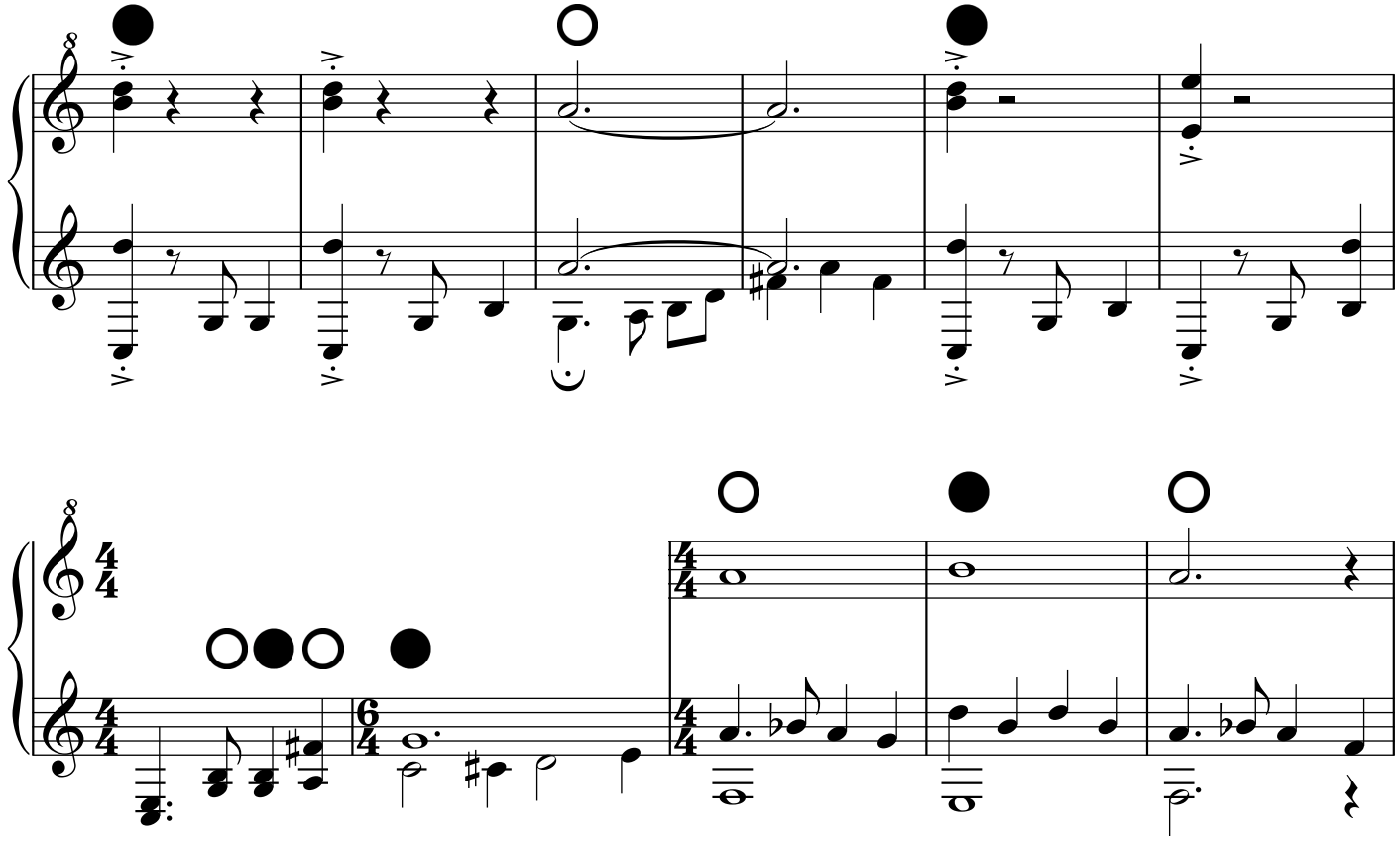
accel. from very slow




mf
♩ = 200
f

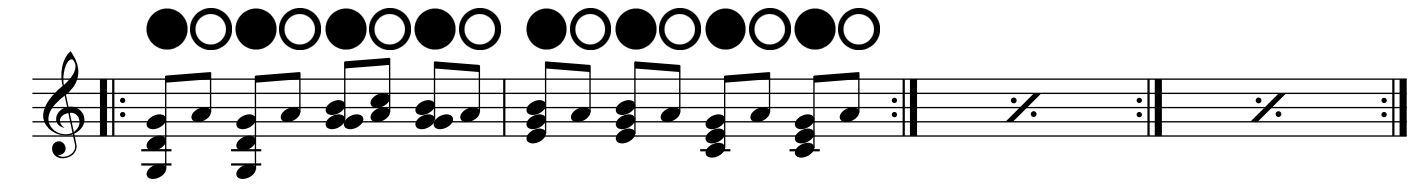

♪ = 210

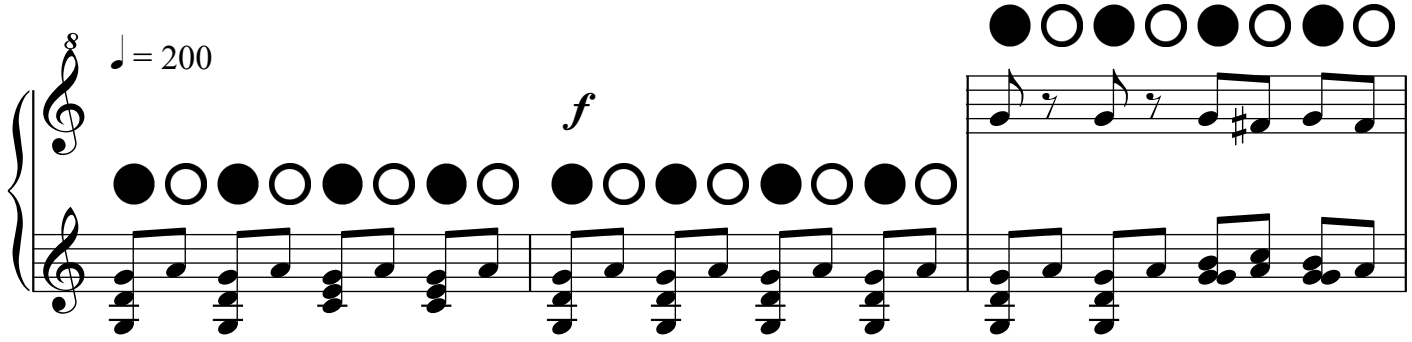

mf
rall.
mf

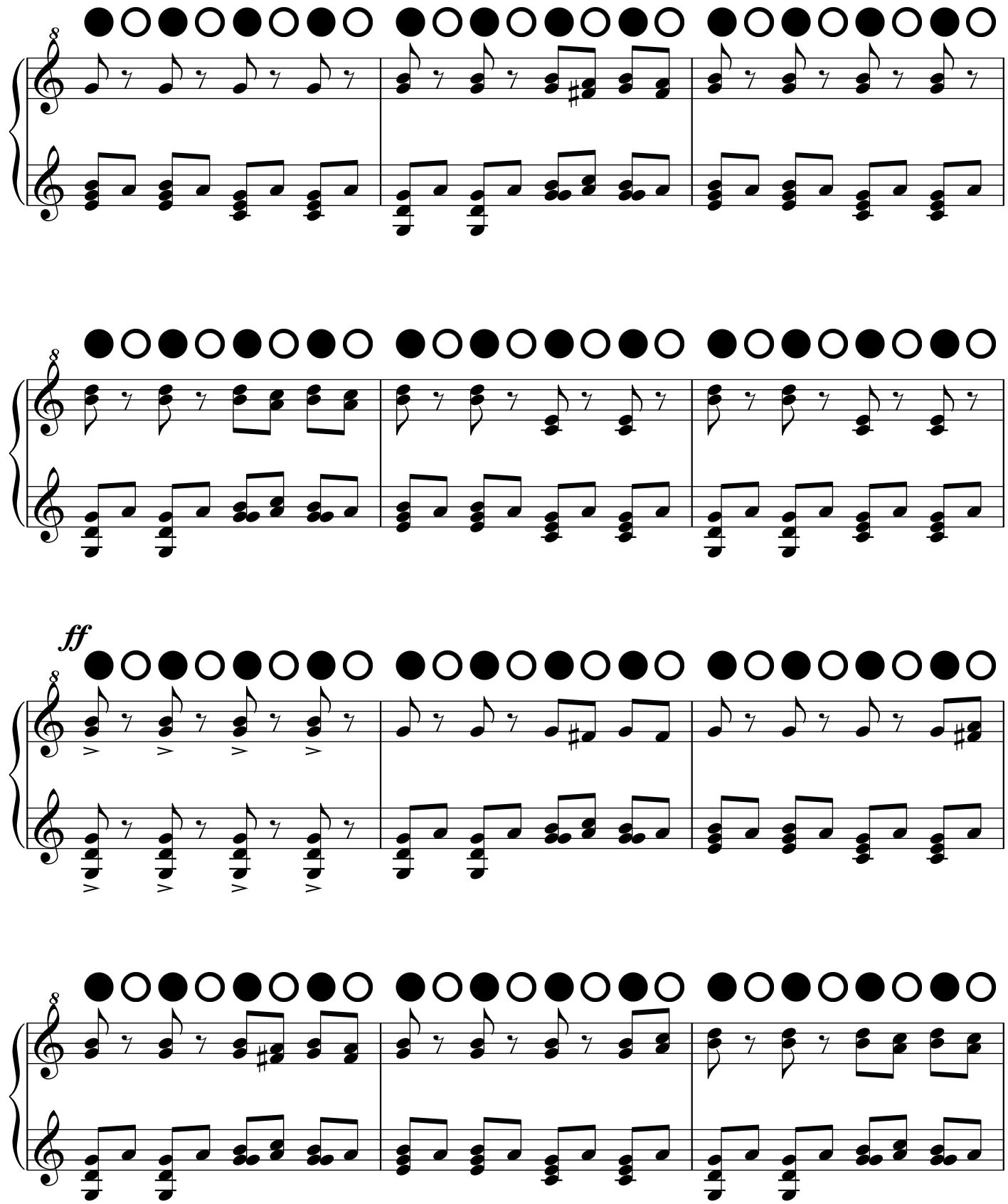


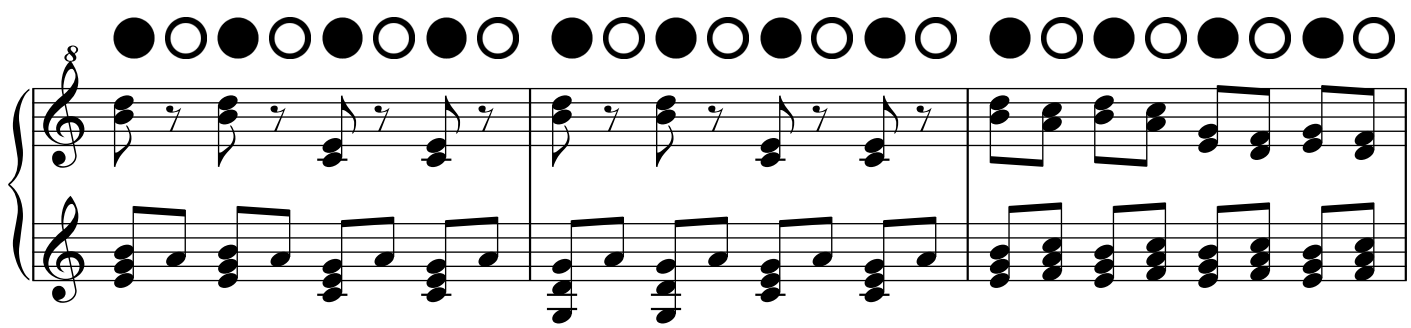
mp *poco a poco cresc. throughout*

accel. from very slow

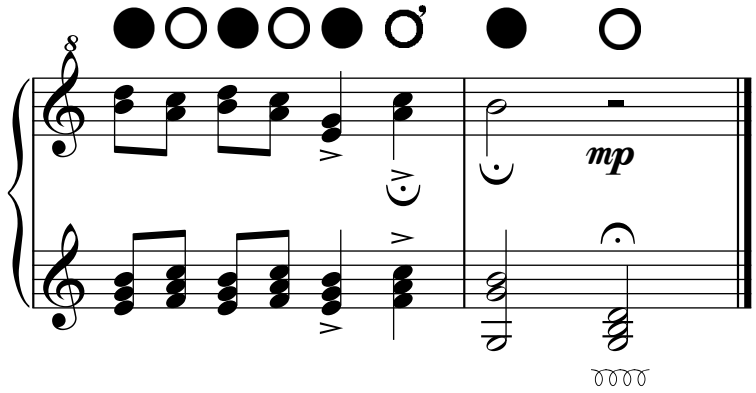




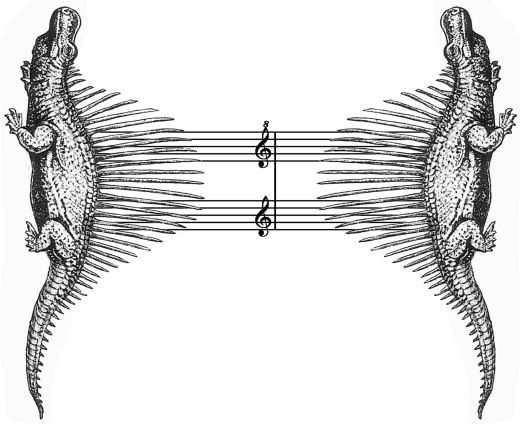

ff



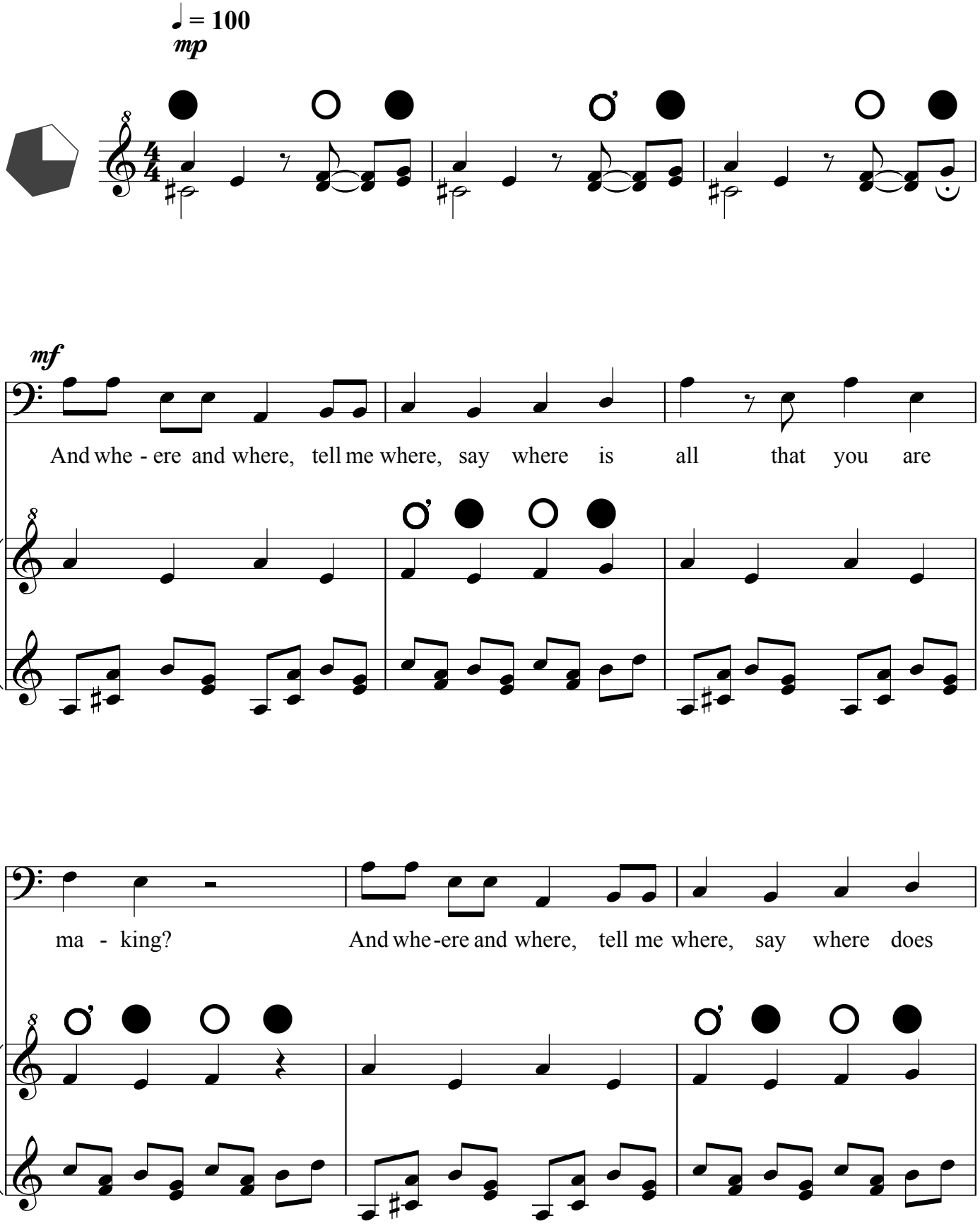
rall.

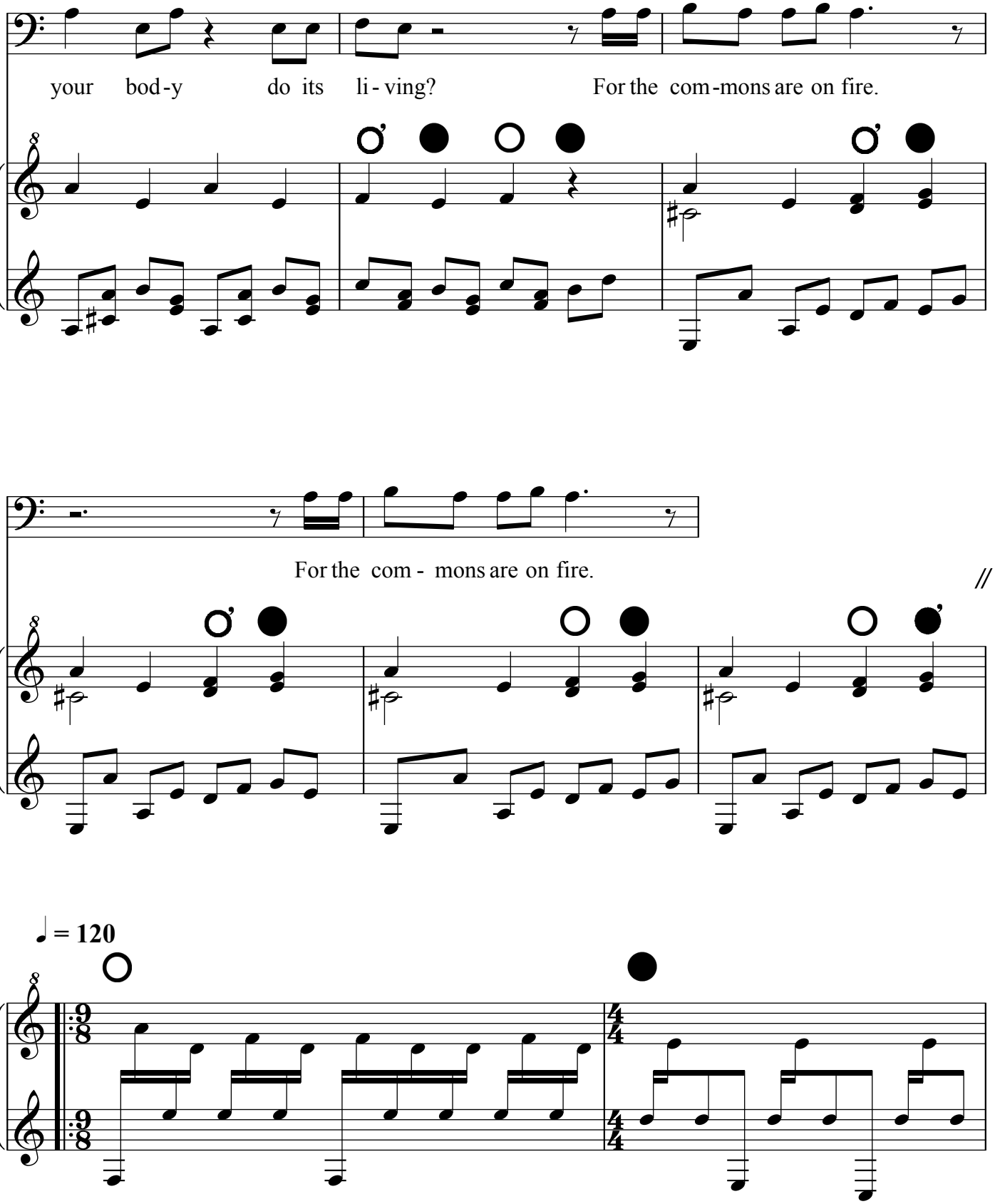


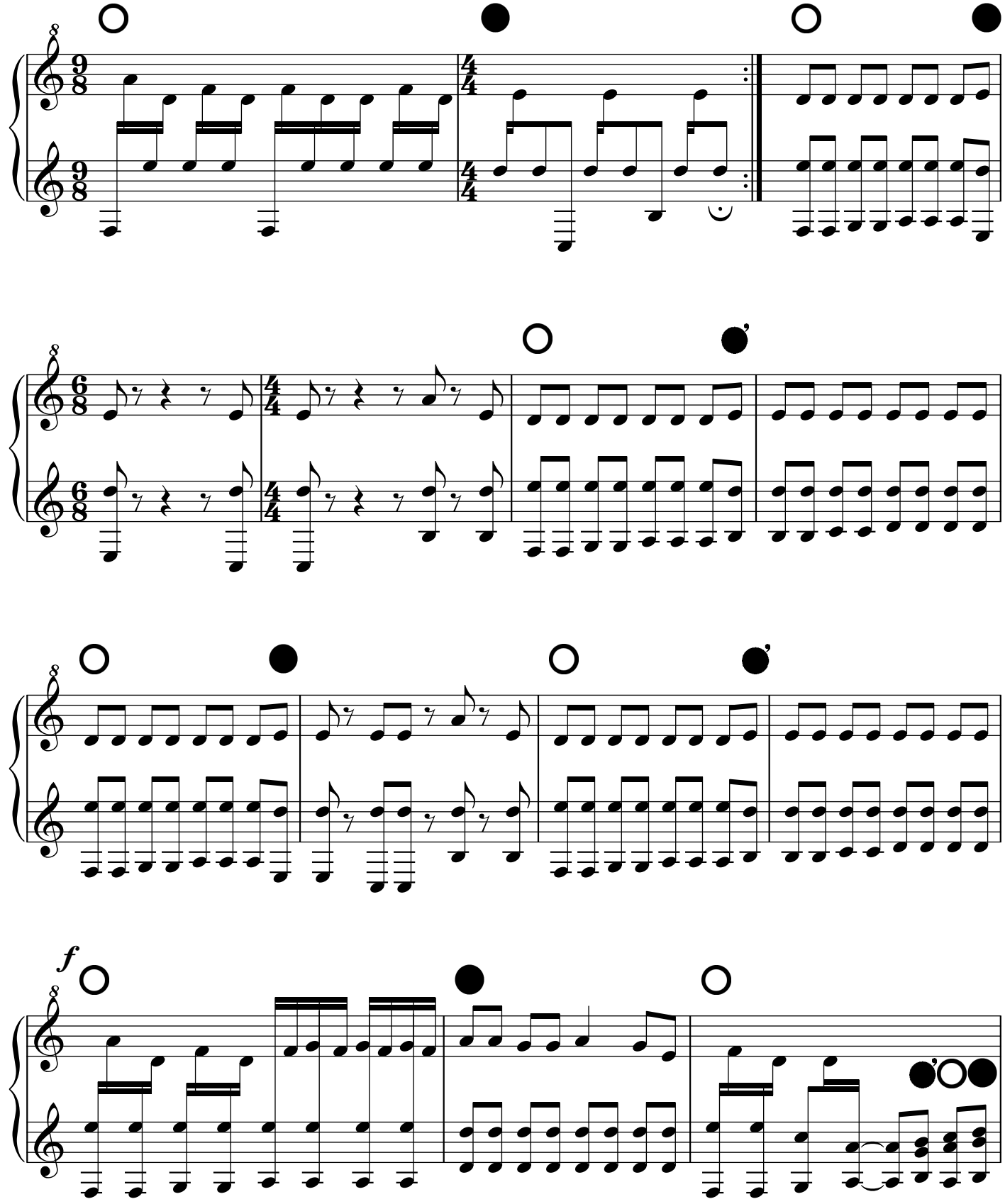
The Commons

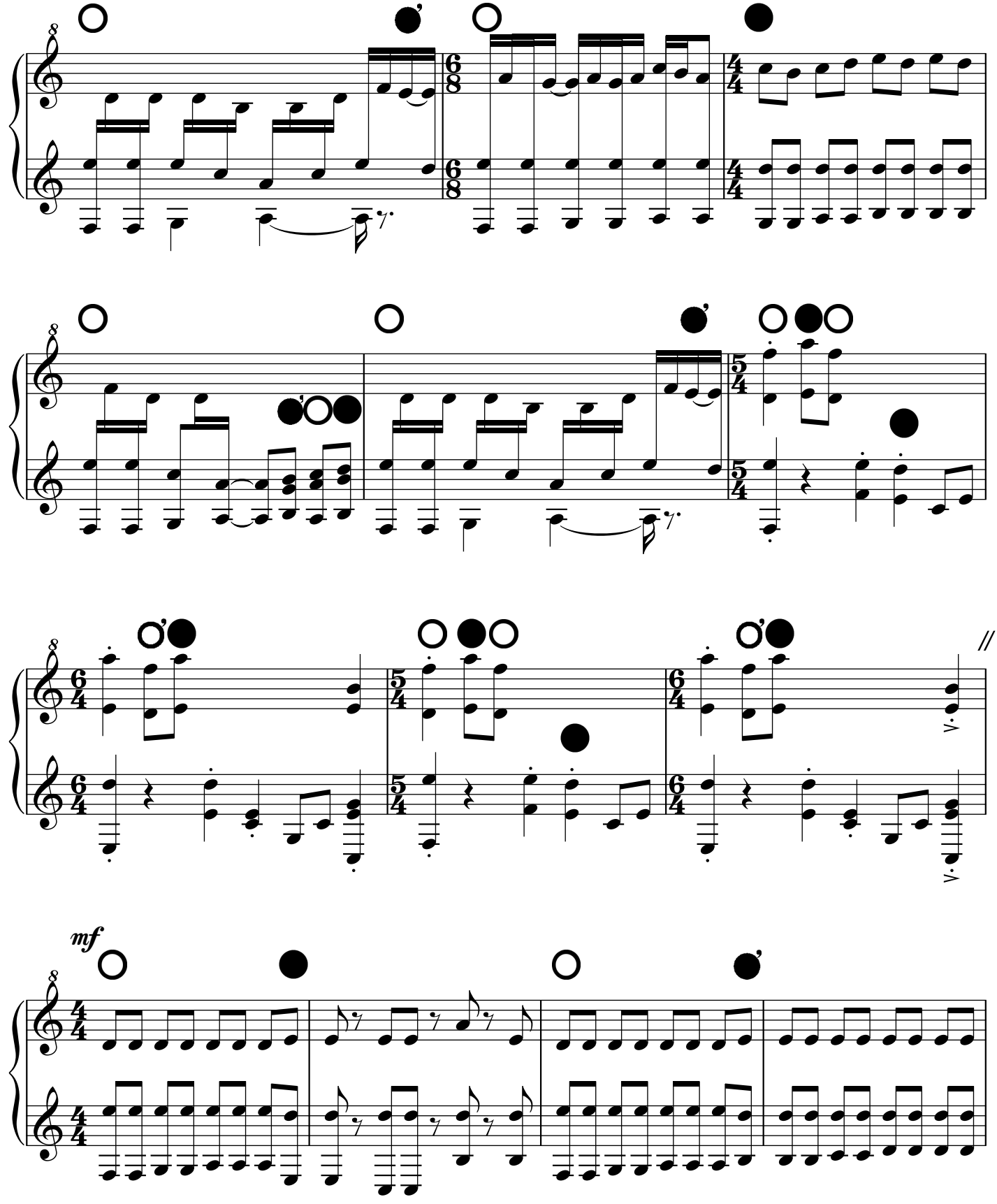


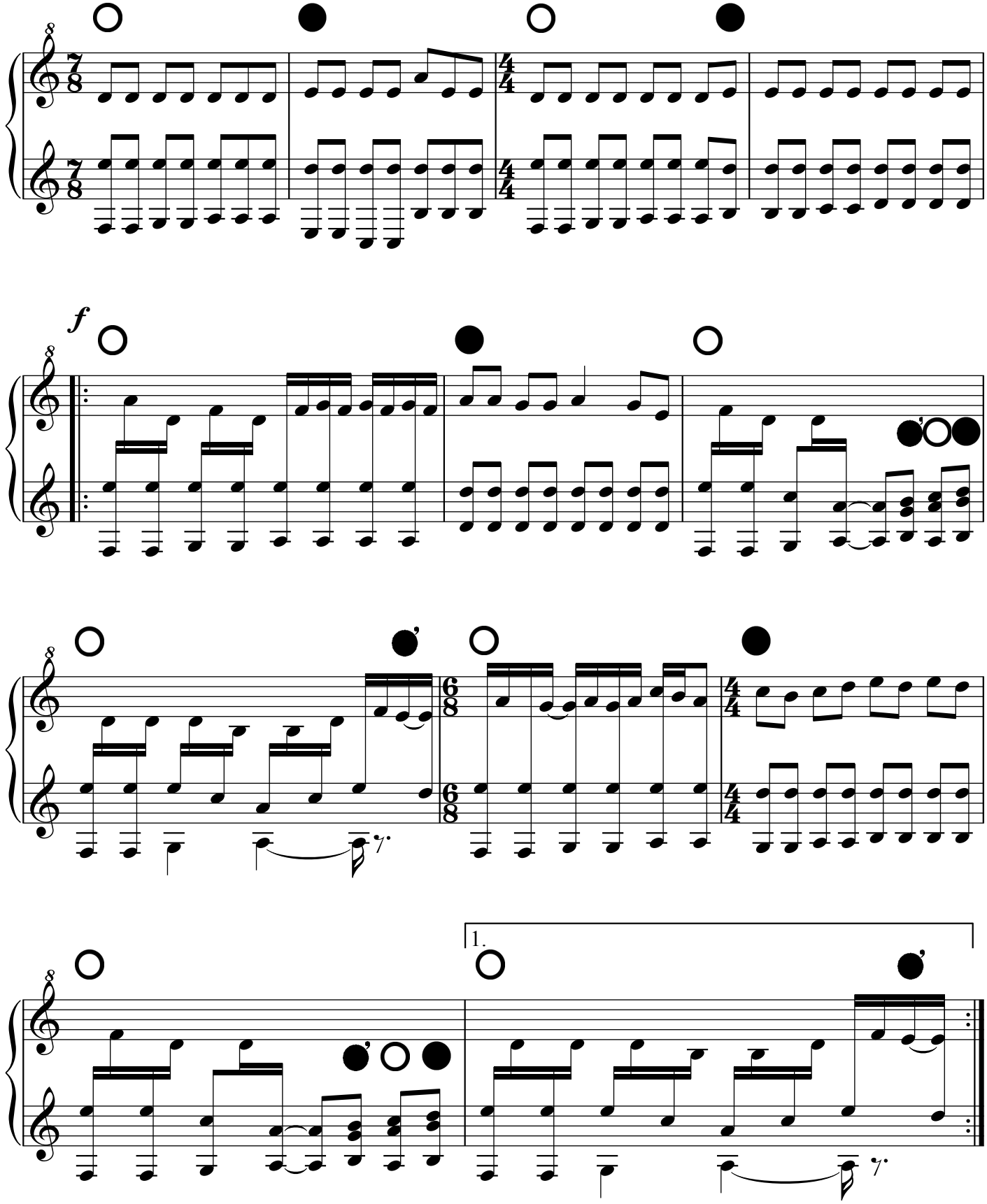
This lyric came out of some reading I did on an economics subject called "the tragedy of the commons": Four ranchers each graze their cattle in a common field. As each wishes to maximize profits, each takes from the common land all they can, while giving in return as little as they can. The pasture is ultimately destroyed by this, but the ranchers all acted rationally at every moment in accordance with their best immediate interests. Sometimes this parable is used to support arguments against common ownership, but it seems more useful as a refutation of shortsightedness.

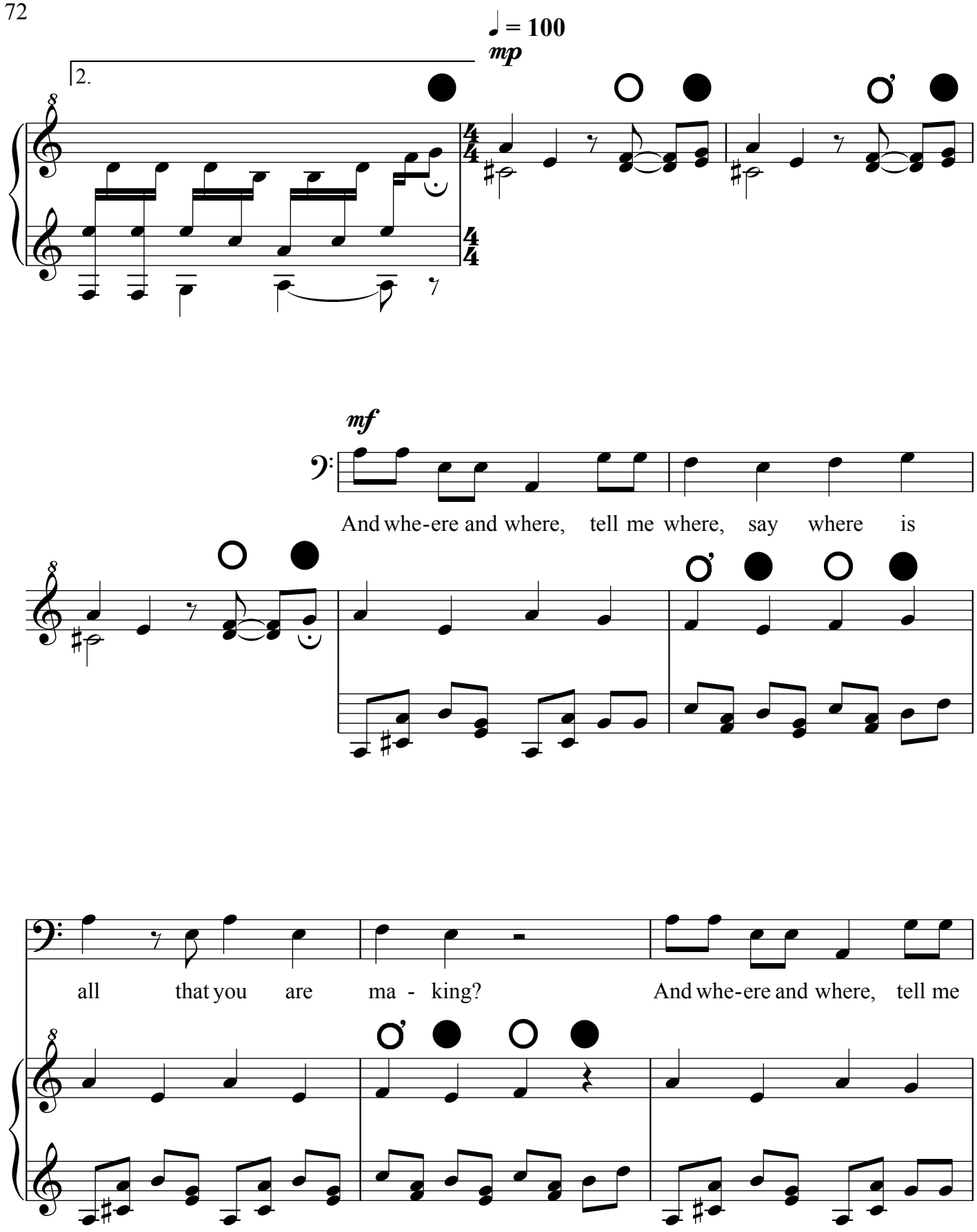

♩ = 100
mp
mf
And whe - ere and where, tell me where, say where is all that you are
ma - king? And whe-ere and where, tell me where, say where does

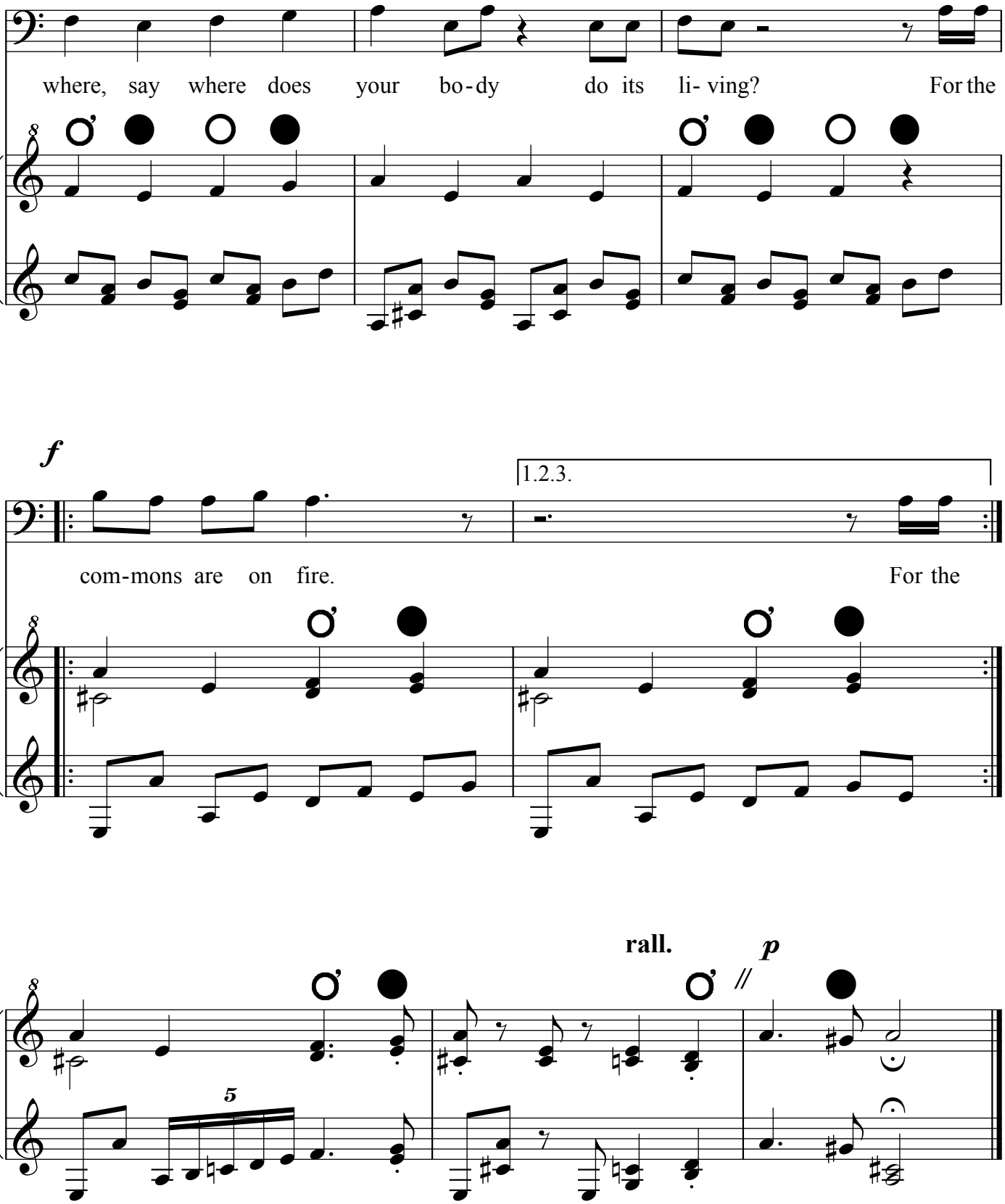

your bod-y do its li-ving? For the com-mons are on fire.
For the com- mons are on fire.
♩ = 120


9/8
4/4
6/8
4/4
f

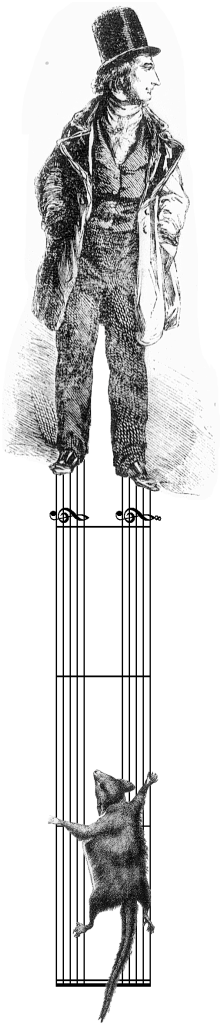

mf


f
1.

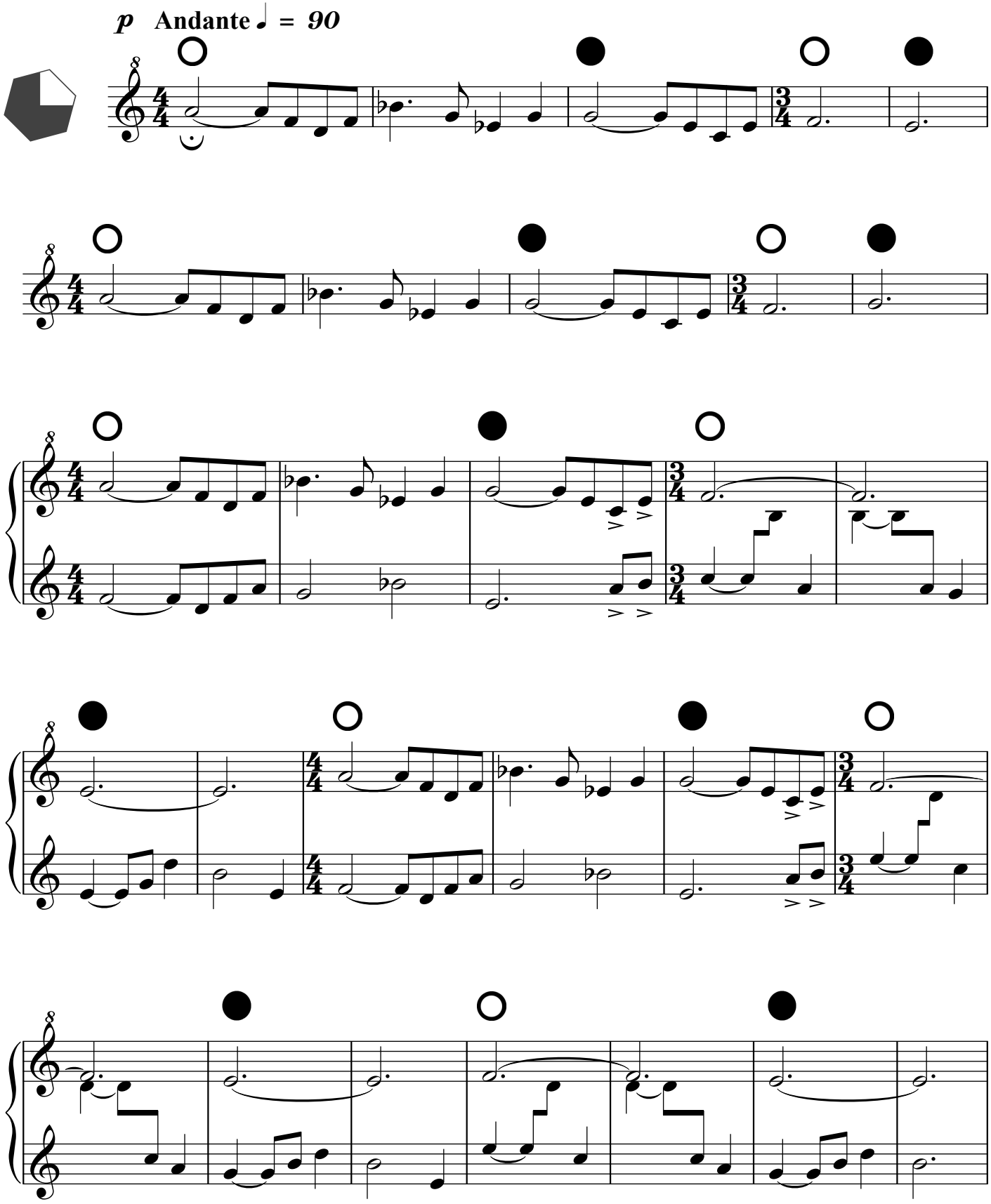

♩ = 100
mp
2.
mf
And whe-ere and where, tell me where, say where is
all that you are ma - king? And whe-ere and where, tell me

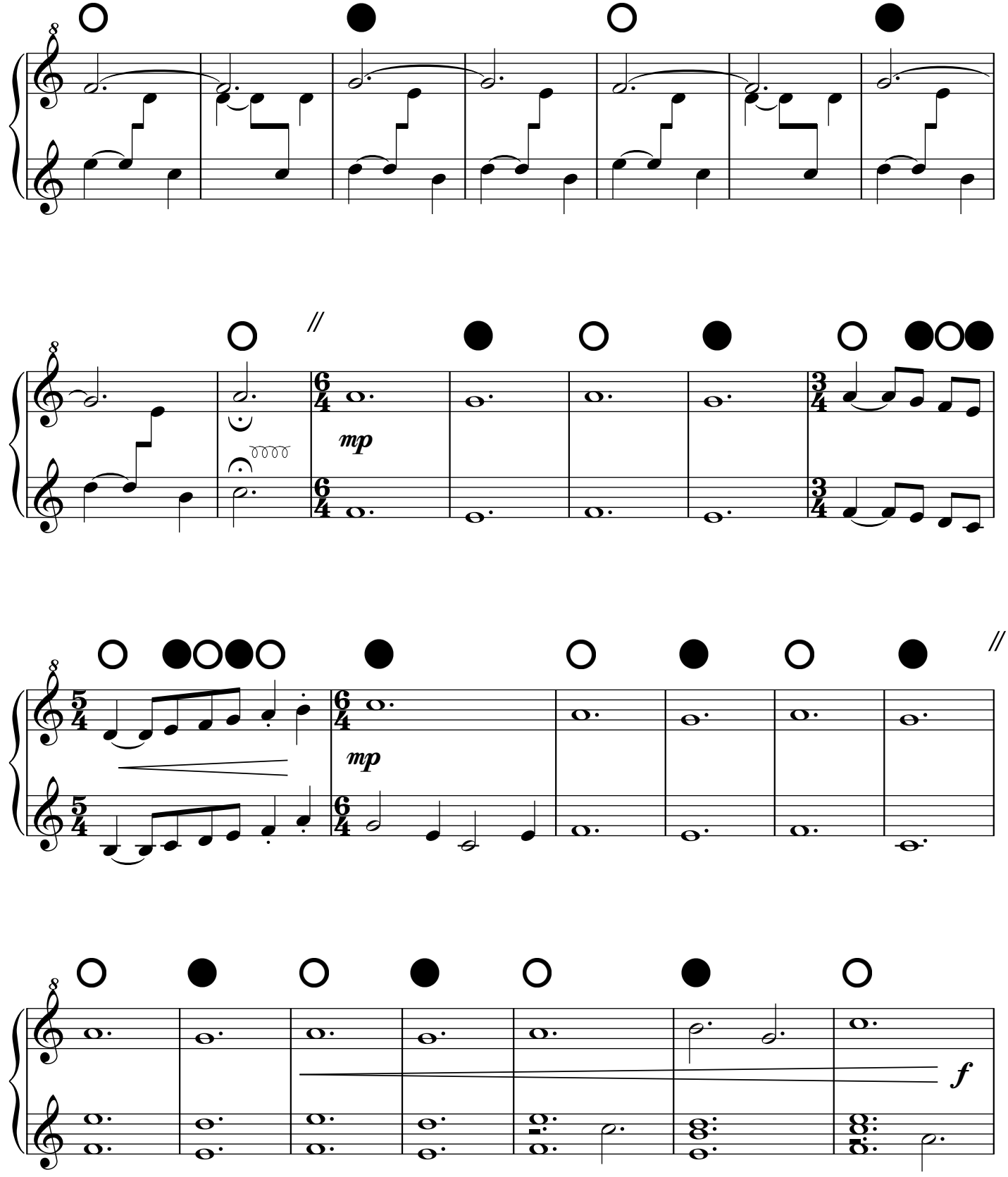

where, say where does your bo-dy do its li- ving? For the
f
1.2.3.
com-mons are on fire. For the
rall.
p
5

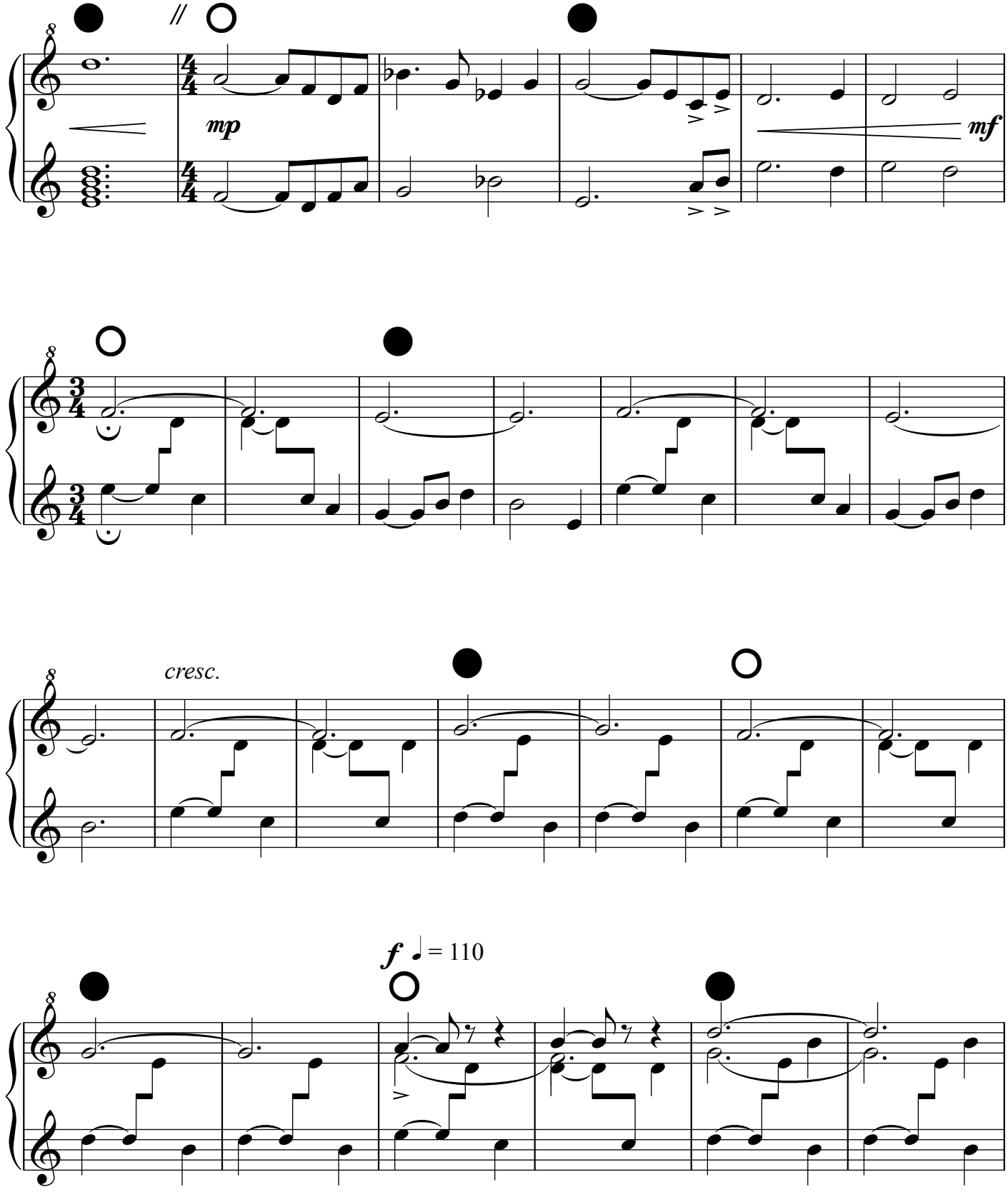
Goodbye, Boys and Girls

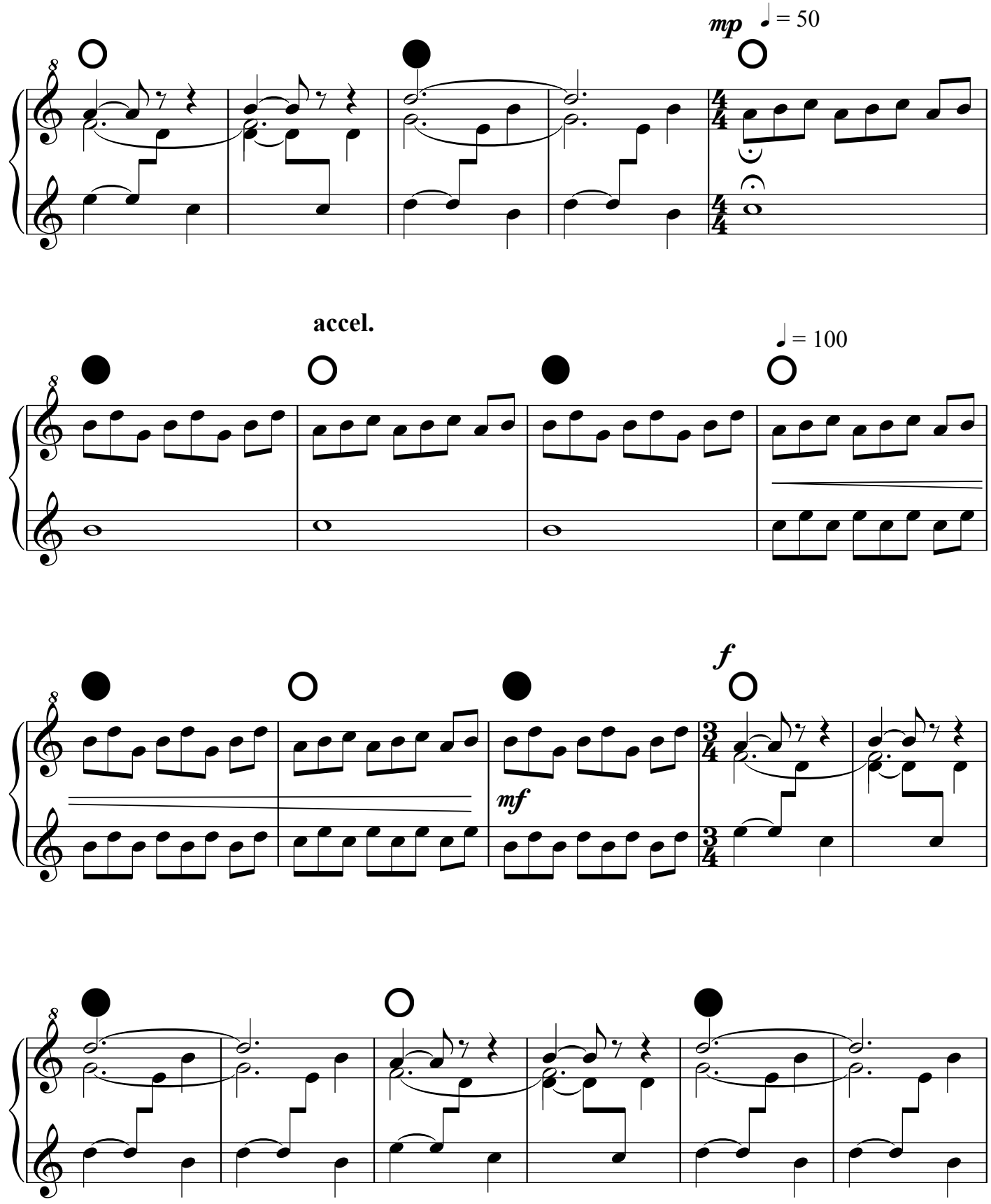


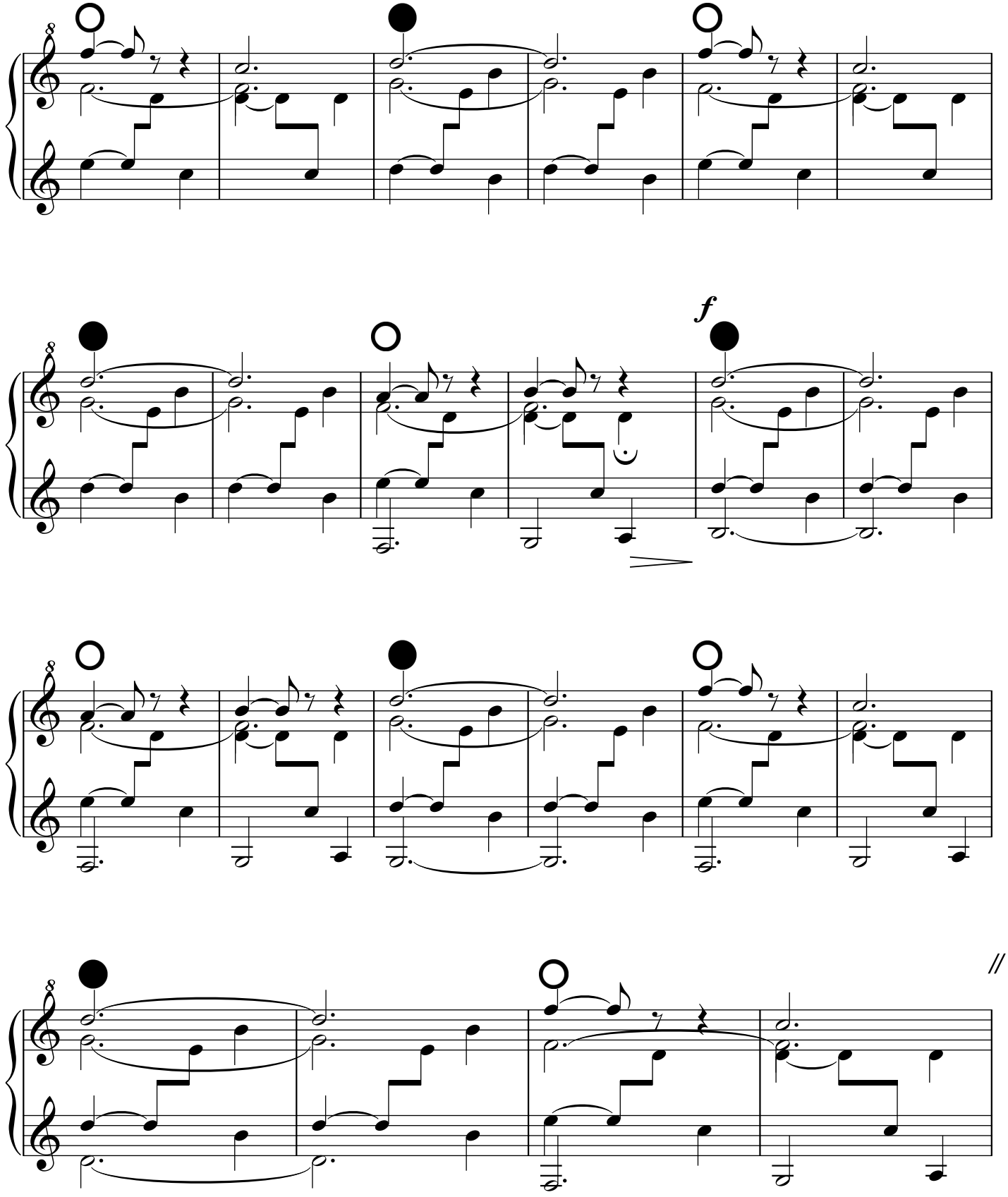
This song originated as a section of the tune "A Medley of Old Songs." One evening while busking at Seattle's monthly art walk, I was approached by a filmmaker who asked me if I would do some music for a documentary he was working on. I decided to work up a longer version of "Goodbye, Boys and Girls," because I thought the themes had potential. It ended up not being used for the film, but I've continued playing it.

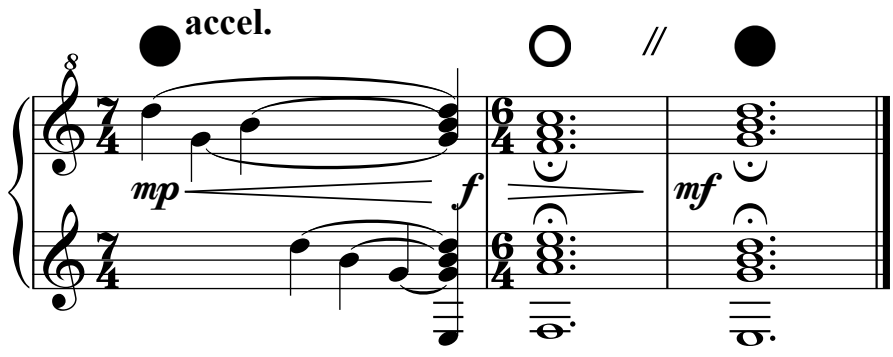

p Andante ♩ = 90


mp
mp
f

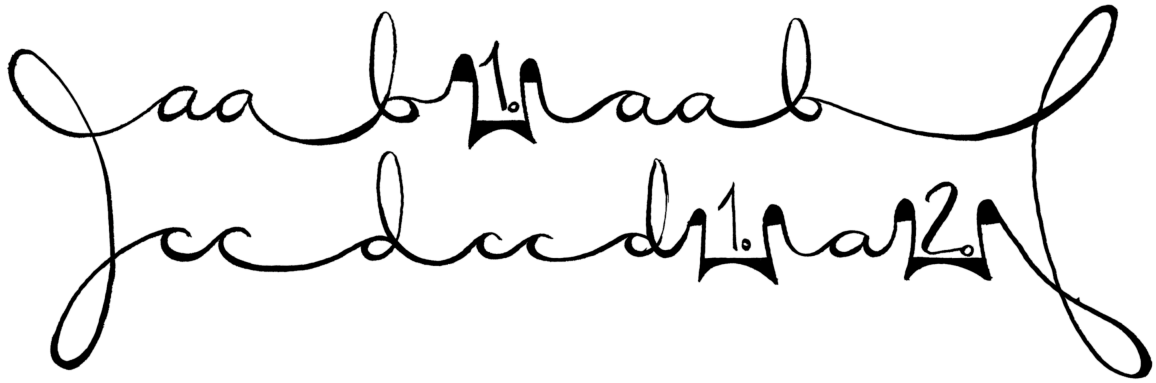

mp
mf
cresc.
f ♩ = 110


mp
♩ = 50
accel.
♩ = 100
f
mf

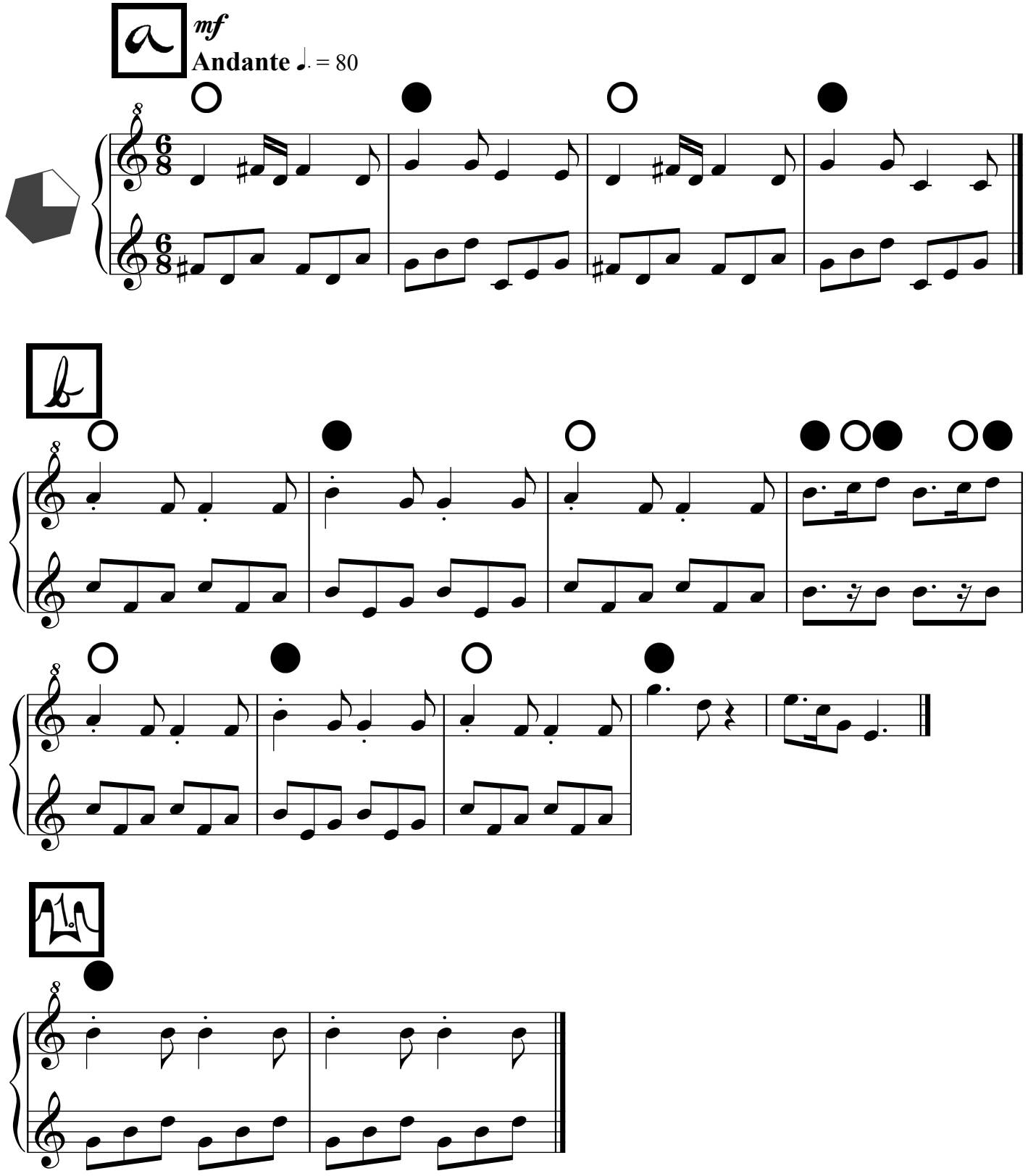

f
//


accel.
mp
f
mf

House of Earth



This song isn't featured on the recording *The Devil's Dreamworld*, but I include it here because it's the first pretty good tune I wrote on the concertina. I titled it "House of Earth" because it gave me the confidence to keep trying. This song is playable on a twenty-button Anglo. I'm preserving here also a notational strategy I used for some time—this sheet music consists of a single repetition of each section of the piece. The map (above) is used by the player to place the sections together. I stopped using this method because it becomes cumbersome if a song contains more than a few sections. This one is simple enough, though, that it doesn't seem too problematic. The pictures of bridges indicate bridge sections.


a
mf
Andante ♩. = 80
b
11

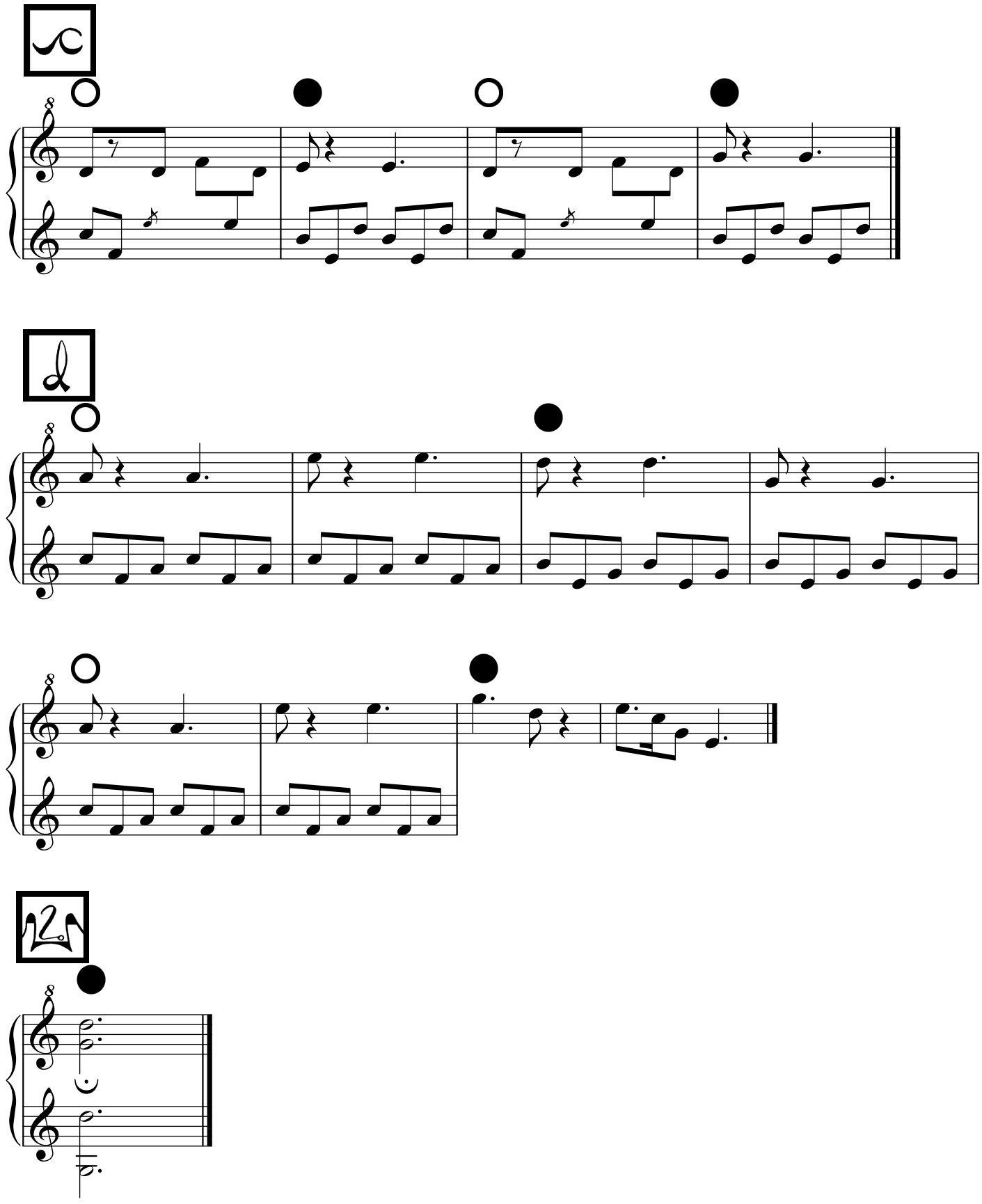


photo: Anne Mathews

Steven R. Arntson was born in 1973 in Washington state. He studied writing and music at Fairhaven College, and has sold hunting gear, bicycles, and donuts. He earned an MFA in creative writing in 1999 from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Steven lives with his wife, Anne, in Seattle, where he teaches, writes, and composes. Visit www.stevenarntson.info for more information.